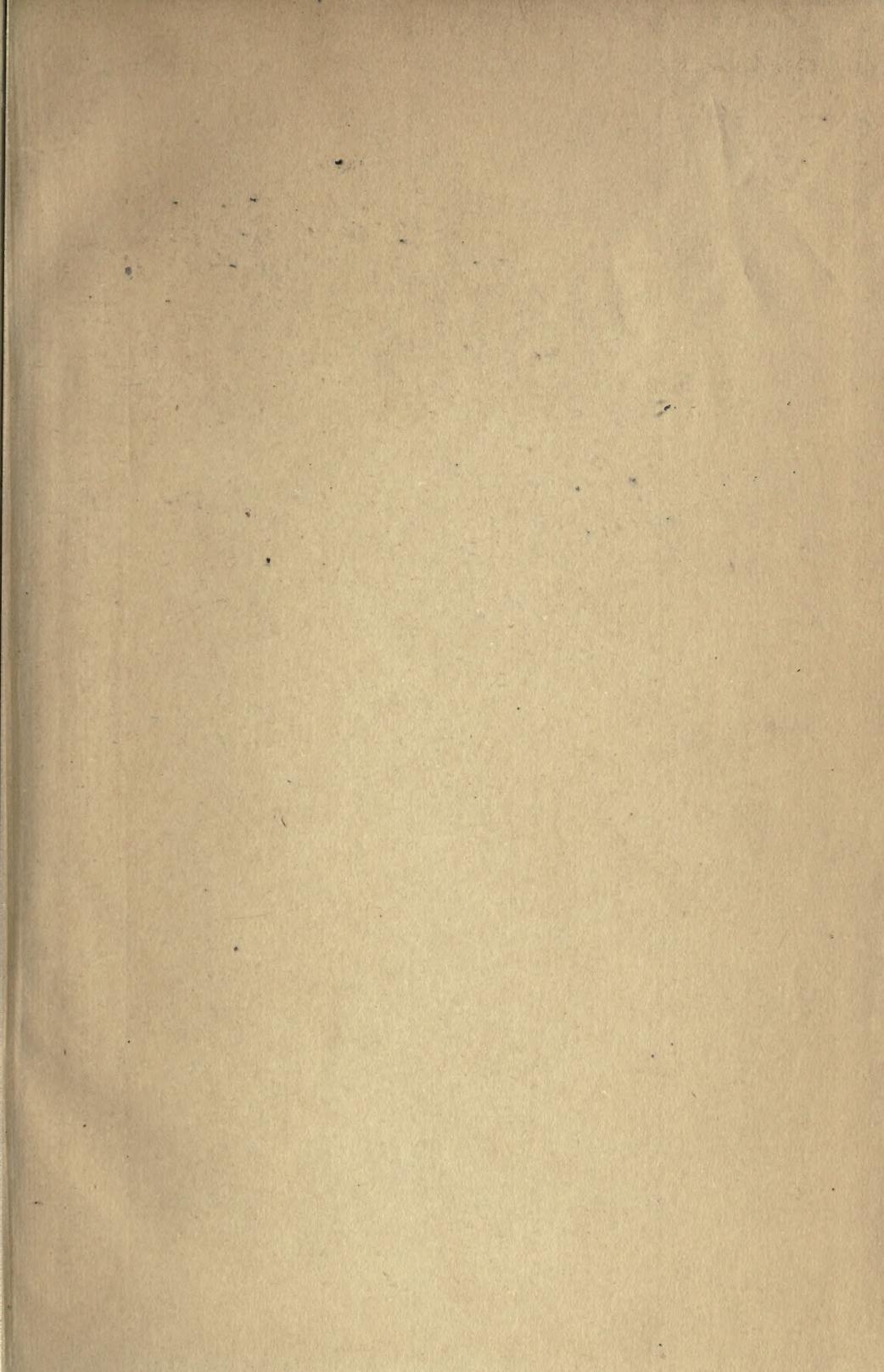


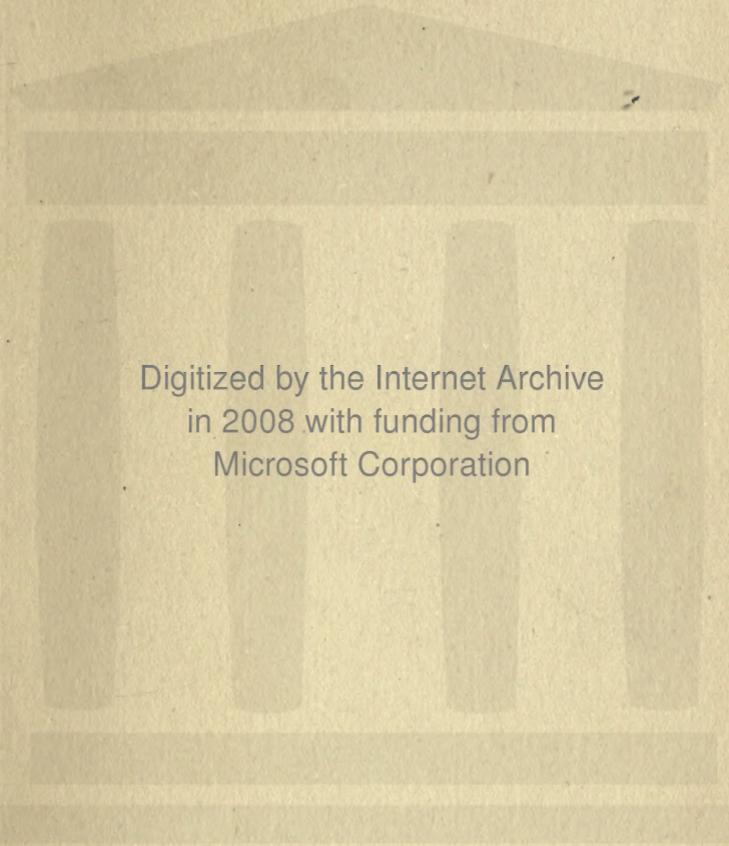
THE QUICK-STEP OF AN EMPEROR
MAXIMILIAN OF MEXICO



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THE QUICK-STEP OF AN EMPEROR

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THE QUICK-STEP OF AN EMPEROR: MAXIMILIAN OF MEXICO

BY
GEORGE P. MESSERVY



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PREFACE

AMONG the great political tragedies that have been enacted in the Western Hemisphere, the career of the Austrian Archduke Maximilian ranks second only to that of President Lincoln. Upon his brief but fateful adventure in Mexico hung momentous issues. It involved the political destinies of a great and populous nation. It was bound up with the hopes of the Roman Catholic Church. It brought about the stricter definition and the more practical application of the Monroe doctrine than any other event. Moreover, apart altogether from the importance of these great political, religious and social questions, the personality of the man in whose career they were focused has an independent and absorbing interest.

Not infrequently misrepresentation prejudices the general estimate of a man who has played a prominent part in the world's affairs, and many years elapse before the actual character, motives and actions of a leader in a great movement become fully known. Such has been the case with Maximilian of Mexico. It has been the writer's aim to correct this misrepresentation and

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to attempt to arrive at a truer estimate of Maximilian's life than that which has hitherto prevailed.

The scope of the present work is that neither of a history nor yet of a historical novel. While observing a strict regard for well-authenticated fact, the writer has principally endeavoured to present a fresh and living portrait of the Emperor as a man. With this end in view, much of the conversation of Maximilian and his expressions of opinion, recorded in the following pages, have been taken bodily from his own writings or from documents of the highest authority recently obtained by the writer in Mexico. It is hoped that thereby certain characteristics have been revealed which will help to explain his motives and actions.

There is a current idea that Maximilian was at the same time an adventurer and a weakling. The writer has shown him to have been a man of more than average ability, of trained faculties, inspired by the highest ideals, political, religious and humanitarian. Unfortunate he was without doubt. Only a certain blindness to well-known tendencies of liberal religious thought in Mexico can explain his acceptance of so difficult a mission. But he was the dupe of a band of desperate conspirators within the Church of Rome. Louis

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Napoleon also used him as a tool for the accomplishment of his own purposes. National interests and the extension of the Roman Church in the Western Hemisphere were alike involved in this amazing enterprise, which proved to be the grave of so many hopes and ambitions.

Maximilian was selected as a Roman Catholic Bourbon prince to rule over a newly created empire. His power rested almost entirely upon the army of Napoleon III., which remained in occupation of the country after the English and Spanish forces had been withdrawn. To the last the French were regarded by both ally and foe alike in the light of invaders and conquerors.

Previous to Maximilian's acceptance of the throne, the people of Mexico had been assured of the establishment of religious toleration, the confiscation of ecclesiastical property (amounting to a third of the productive land of Mexico), the abolition of all religious orders and the institution of civil marriage. After his accession, the Mexican clergy proclaimed that he was pledged to the Holy See to restore the confiscated property of the Church. Marshal Bazaine, however, who commanded the French army of occupation, enforced the maintenance of all *bona-fide* transactions in clerical property, while compelling the revision of such contracts as

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might be proved to be fraudulent, and advocated a *concordat* securing State support for the clergy.

Maximilian had the qualities of a ruler. Possessed of grand conceptions of empire, he hoped to establish the military and naval strength of the country, to put the national finances upon a sound basis and to raise the standard of education and enlightenment among the people. He was, however, neither a constructive statesman nor a great military organiser or leader. He was eminently imbued with the sense of justice, progress and political order, and he was animated by a genuine religious fervour; but the task of governing a people without racial unity or any other cohesive bond was that for a Cæsar—a man with a creative intellect and a relentless iron hand. For this task Maximilian proved unequal, and his condemnation to death as an enemy of the Republic of Mexico set the seal of failure and tragedy upon his career.

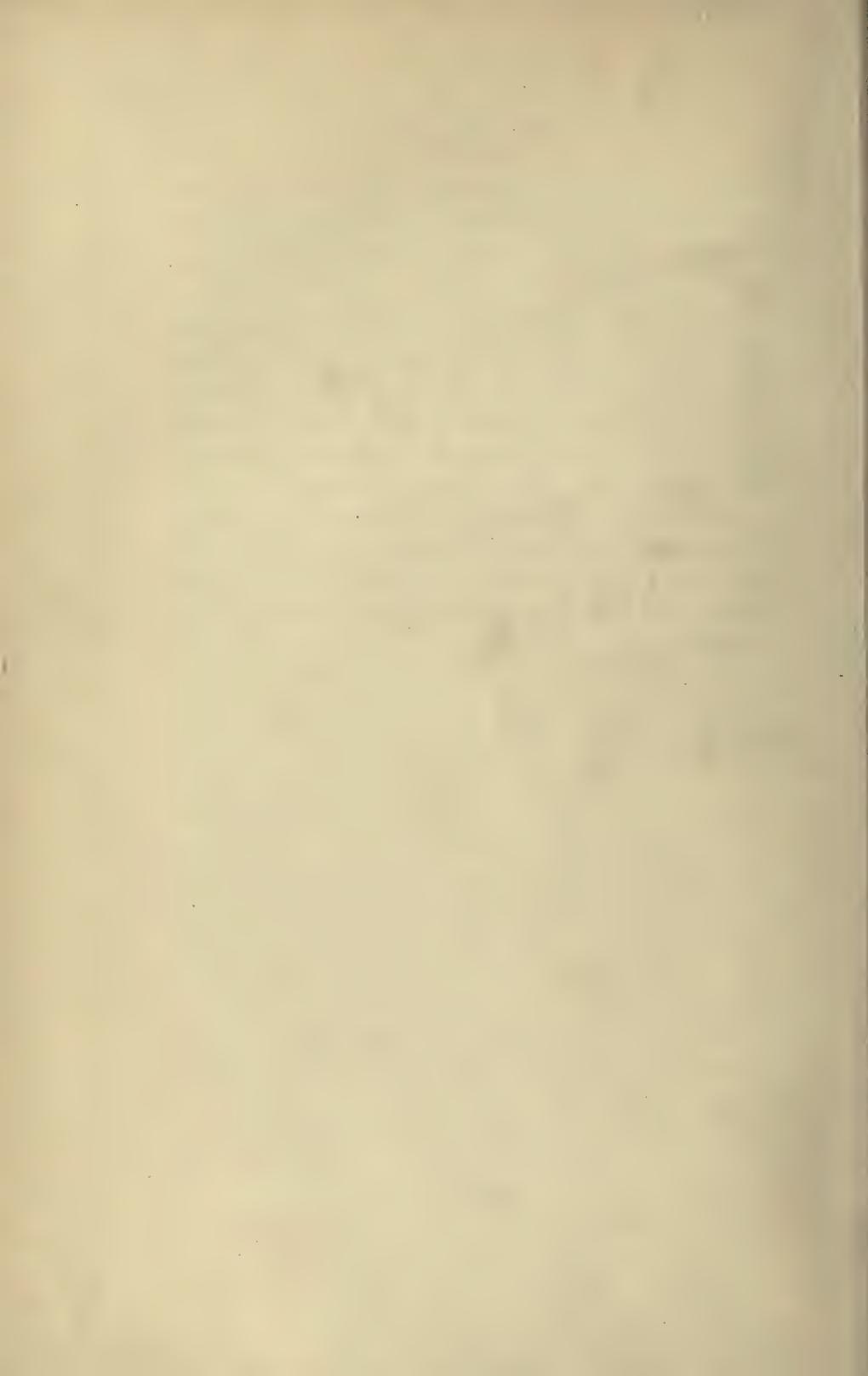
It has been thought that the true conquest of Mexico was achieved by the spread of modern material progress and civilisation. But the overthrow of Porfirio Diaz and the following events have proved the undiminished strength of barbaric Mexico. Looking upon the condition of anarchy now prevailing in the country, it seems probable that if Maximilian had been allowed by the

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United States to reign and had succeeded in carrying out his intentions there would have been a stable government and a prosperous people in Mexico to-day.

It is furthermore believed that the insistence upon the Monroe doctrine in 1866 worked against the advancement of civilisation in Mexico. Mexico civilised and ordered with productiveness like Canada would be a more desirable neighbour than Mexico the International nuisance.

In respect to the Monroe doctrine the United States may be likened to an enterprising man carrying a powerful hand weapon which is likely to get him into more trouble than it will get him out of.



I

HE who has once stood beside the graves of the rulers of Iberia, in the vast and sombre crypt of the Cathedral of Granada, realises that peculiar veneration with which the name and work of those great sovereigns who expelled the Moors from Spain will ever be regarded. There is to be found the expression of whatever is great or perfect in the flight of Spanish conquest to the Western Hemisphere.

Ferdinand Joseph Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, upon the occasion of his visit to the sarcophagi of Ferdinand and Isabella, learned for the first time of the existence of a grave that held the remains of the Infante, Don Michael, an elder brother of Charles V. Turning to a companion at his side, he said: "This child died by a decree of fate, to make room for a man who was great for all time. For such a young life, history has no pages. It is only when a man either does deeds or resists a progressive development that his name is noted down in the books of Clio; moving-springs or drag-chains alone become known. May Heaven spare me from being counted among the latter! I

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am," he continued, "in the presence of the spirits of my greatest ancestors, who lived in action, who ruled and built up and created the great strength and fame of Spain and extended it to the New World. See! here are my features in this portrait of Philip the Handsome — his too the sharp, large Hapsburg features. Each century has its features, as also every country, and I have inherited those of my ancestors. I, in simple modern dress, here stand by the coffins of those on whose sunny throne my family would still rule, if there had been a Charles the Second of Austria." Maximilian looked once more into the dead, still faces of the stone likenesses of his ancestors. "They were great men," he said, "who enacted a portion of history, who have done something on this earth, have begotten a mighty, far-ruling race, and now rest alone in a solitary chapel. *Vanitas vanitatum!* Instead of a glittering court surrounding them as formerly, a poorly clad sacristan takes a torch, opens a small iron door and leads the way down to a low vault, without any embellishment, any ornament—where the naked truth grins." And continuing, scarcely realising that he spoke to his friend—more in the fashion of a soliloquy :

"Here rest those proudly royal couples in these

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narrow coffins! One feels the heart oppressed, and the *memento mori* to princes shudder through the soul. I am nearer them by consanguinity than the Spanish rulers of to-day. I feel the family impulse to rule lives even after centuries; and a melancholy regret moves my soul to see the great deeds of these makers of the kingdoms of the New World forgotten by their people and not thought of by the new dynasty."

It is in his Memoirs that Maximilian relates this visit. He was then a junior officer in the Austrian navy. "We wandered back and forth," he continues, "through crypt and choir, examining each fine piece of chiselled marble, and deciphering each epitaph and inscription." Finally the Quasimodo unlocked a small room, and showed the Archduke the regalia of the Catholic Ferdinand and the Prayer Book of Isabella. Proudly, yet sadly, Maximilian took in his hand the golden crown and the once gilded sword, exclaiming: "Would it not be a brilliant dream to draw the latter in order to win the former!"

II

IT was in one of those narrow thoroughfares of the city of London savouring just enough of the Orient to give the least smack of a foreign quarter to the world's metropolis that the figure of an elderly man might have been seen at an early hour of the business day in 1864 threading his way from Cannon Street amidst the rush of pedestrians. The majority of close observers would not have put him down in their mental catalogue as other than a London resident. Ample in proportion, clad in black, with the customary top hat—perhaps a shade flatter in the brim than was the mode—sufficiently dignified in port and general bearing, measured in tread, unaccompanied, and altogether unostentatious, Baron James Rothschild, of Paris, paused momentarily before the doorway of the great house in St Swithin's Lane which bore his family name. The richest man of his day and of all subsequent days, a critical observer coming face to face with him would have noted the unusually penetrating glance of his Oriental eyes and put him down as a man of action.

He hesitated for a moment in order to assure

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himself of his whereabouts, as he was unaccustomed to visit London, and his memory had to be rallied at the doorway which led to his destination. He had just come from France, and many years had passed since he had visited London. He entered the hallway and, without further glance to right or left, passed on into the counting-room, entering the private chambers of the great house. After a casual though cheerful greeting with the chiefs of the departments, who came in to pay their respects to him, he withdrew to the innermost office, and seated himself at the end of a long table to await the arrival of his English cousins. Only a few minutes passed before the head of the London concern entered, and upon interchanging cordial greetings and inquiries as to the various members of their respective families, the London member said :

"Our clients will soon be here. I heard directly from them yesterday, and they were much gratified to hear that you had come across the Channel especially to be with them here to-day."

Baron James, smiling agreeably at the compliment, said : "The Emperor Napoleon is much interested in this Mexican undertaking ; and our intimacy with him and his government is so close

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that, in spite of the opinions I may hold regarding the negotiations afoot, I deemed it desirable to be present at this meeting, and at least to learn directly from the Church delegate and your correspondent the exact conditions of the loan that they propose to make, as well as the present state of affairs in Mexico, for it is certain they will play no small part in the events of the next few years, which will probably see the making and unmaking of national credits."

Hardly had he ceased speaking before Lord Rothschild turned to the door and greeted Mr Davidson, whom he introduced to Baron James as the representative of the English house of Rothschild in Mexico. Baron James received him with his usual quiet formality, remarking that his name and work were so familiar to him that he felt well acquainted with him already.

The door opened and almost immediately afterwards three men of clerical appearance were ushered in by the porter of the establishment. Lord Rothschild cordially extended his hand to the foremost of the party, whom he introduced to Baron James as the Papal delegate. Mr Davidson next introduced the second of the clerics, the delegate of the Mexican Church, who had accompanied him from Mexico especially to be present at this meeting. As these introduc-

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tions were proceeding, the last of the clerical trio approached the long table in the middle of the room and deposited a roll of papers at the end farthest from Baron James. Without any sign of recognition, he stood quietly looking at the parchments, with his finger-tips just touching the highly polished mahogany. Instinctively every person in the room simultaneously turned towards him, when at that moment the entrance door again opened and the French ambassador was announced. A young Austrian military officer accompanied him. They were both cordially greeted by the Rothschilds.

"I think we are all here now," said Lord Rothschild, looking round and bowing the ambassador to a seat beside Baron James, himself taking the chair on the other side of that amiably disposed gentleman. He said cheerily: "Gentlemen, be seated."

All this time the solitary priest had stood over his papers, unmoved and unnoticed. He was a man of erect figure and strong proportions, with a slight German-Hebrew cast of countenance and of dark, almost swarthy, complexion, with large, penetrating black eyes. His garb was that of the Order of the Society of Jesus, simple and unostentatious as his bearing.

A momentary silence followed the seating of

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the company, after which Lord Rothschild remarked that the object of the meeting was so well known to them all that a general explanatory statement was scarcely necessary.

"Coming at once to the pith of the matter," said Baron James, "I understand that your Mr Davidson has come to us from Mexico with a proposition direct from the clerical party there for the borrowing of 125,000,000 francs—£5,000,000 sterling," said he, correcting himself and smilingly addressing Lord Rothschild—"giving as security therefor a portion of the most valuable property of the Roman Church in Mexico. Monseigneur Obero is the Papal delegate, who has come with the sanction of his Holiness Pius IX., and my young friend of Austria represents any interest which his Royal Highness, the Archduke Maximilian, may have in the controversy—I beg a thousand pardons—which his Royal Highness may have in any phase of the proposition."

All present listened attentively to Baron James, who, as he ceased speaking, gave the impression that he had said all that he had desired to say.

"Father Emanuel," said Mr Davidson, "is prepared to lay before you, gentlemen, the plans and motives of the Church in this matter, and the plots showing such possessions of the estates

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of the Church as it is willing to pledge for this loan."

"Yes," said Father Emanuel approvingly, bowing deferentially to the Papal delegate who sat at his right, "that is precisely the object of my mission. The Church has vast and valuable property in Mexico, and it is amply able to part with a portion thereof for the good of its people. Really, the proposition is simplicity itself, and the uses to which the funds, so derived, are to be put, are so well understood by us that there can be no doubt of the advantages to be derived by the people of Mexico."

"What," interrupted Baron James, "is the value of this security if the present Government (which I understand to be clerical) is overthrown?"

"The same as it is at present," replied the Jesuit, rising and speaking for the first time since he had entered the room. His attitude was at first aggressive. Each of the party showed some sense of realisation of a presence not particularly pleasant, and one hitherto disregarded in connection with the question that they had gathered to discuss.

It was Father Fischer who stood before them; his deep-set, penetrating eyes, glancing quickly round the assembled company, seemed to pierce

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through, and for the moment to subjugate, all present.

"The climate, the geography and the Church of Rome in Mexico," continued the priest, "are alike unchangeable and indestructible. It is now more than forty years since the Mexican people threw off the yoke of Spanish rule. Since that time constant change, without progress, has been the order of the day. No less than thirty bloody revolutions have swept over some portions, or all portions, of the country. In turn, Imperialists, Royalists, Republicans, in fact all the various political factions have been in power, and each in turn has fallen. There is no strength of fibre in their composition, chiefly because of their infamy, their self-seeking and their individual ambition. The peoples of Mexico, despite the infusion of Spanish blood, are nomadic; transitory wars and transitory governments alike fail to make any impression upon them. The Catholic Church alone possesses stability. There has been some confiscation of its property by the various self-styled governments, nevertheless no other tenure is possible, as the Church excommunicates any person buying or receiving ecclesiastical land. Therefore the Church in Mexico desires to see the establishment of the strongest possible form of government. That government should be

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Imperial, and if necessary must be strongly backed by European arms. It is our belief that his Imperial Majesty Louis Napoleon, fully realising the enfeebled condition of the United States of America in its gigantic struggle, is prepared to choose for the head of our Mexican State an emperor from the House of Hapsburg, and to maintain that emperor on his throne by an arm of his military service, sent especially to secure order in Mexico."

The priest spoke calmly but with great earnestness. His aggressiveness had completely disappeared, but nevertheless he left upon his hearers an impression, somewhat apparent in their faces, of a positive, penetrating personality. While speaking he had begun to unroll the parchments he had brought to the meeting, which he had placed upon the table in rolls when he first came in. They were the plans of the property of the Church in Mexico; and as he continued, he handed one to the right and another to the left, till each person present had a blue-print before him, not all alike in size or diagram, but each relating to certain parcels of the Church property.

"The value of the Church property in Mexico," Father Fischer continued, with the air of an advocate desirous of making clear a point of

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fact to a jury, "is more than £75,000,000. The territory comprises one-third of the total extent of the country. It is not proposed that the Church should pledge all this as security for a loan of £25,000,000. Not all this property is commercially valuable in its present condition ; and it is not the purpose of the Church to place a mortmain upon any of the ground consecrated to the God we worship. These parcels it reserves ; but the Church, nevertheless, offers ample security for the amount desired. All the parcels appearing on these charts in ochre colour are of commercial value—those in the city for their rentals, those in the country on account of their natural productiveness. It is these that it offers as ample security, for a term of ten or twenty years at a rate of interest to be agreed upon, with the stipulation that the funds so derived shall be expended by the head of the Mexican Government—that head to be a Roman Catholic monarch of European birth, whose object shall be so to govern the people of Mexico that they shall have permanent political institutions, and the blessings arising from the beneficence of the Holy Roman Church for their eternal salvation and well-being. We are friends here. I may speak plainly. The Church has the assurance of the good-will in this undertaking

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of the Emperor Louis Napoleon of France—an assurance that will, if necessary, be backed up by force. Joseph Ferdinand Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, is the most desirable and available candidate for the throne of Mexico. His acceptance of it depends upon two conditions—the assurance that the Mexican people and their leaders desire that he should become their Emperor, and the arrangement of the proposed loan upon satisfactory—that is to say, not too burdensome—terms."

"What is the opinion of his Imperial Majesty Louis Napoleon regarding the attitude of the United States of America in relation to such a project?" asked Lord Rothschild. "Its remarkable theories upon the Monroe doctrine might be stirred to life again." His remark was addressed to Father Fischer, who remained standing, but before the priest could reply, or perhaps before he chose to, the French ambassador, now for the first time joining in the conversation, said in a positive and assertive manner :

"The Monroe doctrine cannot apply here; first, because such a theory is altogether preposterous in the face of the determination of any emperor to establish a Roman Catholic empire in the Western Hemisphere; and also because, howsoever the United States may object to such

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a project, such objection will be unavailing, in view of the civil war still raging there. The world is soon to see the great Republic of the West broken in twain—its southern member allied to monarchy, if not actually monarchical in form, its northern member arising out of anarchy into a military despotism, ruled by a dictator, the offspring of this tremendous struggle."

After this interruption the priest began again.

"This hope of the Roman Church in Mexico is not a new thing," he said. "The Church is eternal and always successful. Its plans are of no narrow order. Already the assent of the Mexican people is being—I might say has been—obtained for the reception of the Emperor Maximilian as their ruler. Already the attitude of the Confederate States of America is ascertained, and we—that is, the clerical party in Mexico—have obtained assurances that we are to have in them a firm and close ally. Their great military power, in co-operation with that which the Emperor Napoleon has promised to the Emperor Maximilian, must make the work of God in Mexico paramount."

As soon as Father Fischer had finished, Baron James de Rothschild began to address the company.

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"The holy Father, who has so lucidly set forth the business of this day," he said, "has wisely remarked that the only permanent things in Mexico are the climate, the geography and the Church—the Church gaining part of its permanency by its fondness for ownership of the geography. What grasp it has, or will develop, upon the climate remains to be made clear; but I doubt not that the climatic effect upon the people will be found to be an unearned increment of the Roman Church in Mexico. But, seriously," he said, now for the first time directing his remarks and looks to Father Fischer, "nothing is stronger than its weakest part. To be sure, we have seen lust for gain, greed for government, desire to be glorified by military achievements, all in turn indulged to the detriment of this people. Yet the deplorable condition of Mexico to-day is due to that people only—a mixed and in great part a degraded people, a people stupefied by ignorance, which has been fostered by a prosperous Church, a people indifferent to the arts of peace, irresponsible, inert, ignorant, intolerant, and mentally and morally indolent! If the Church, instead of using this great accumulation of property for the mere continuance of its power, had established compulsory education among the

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classes, and, through the centuries that have passed since the introduction of European civilisation into the Western Hemisphere, had brought the light of knowledge and the possibilities of learning to those now benighted beings—then the Roman Church would indeed have gained a permanent place in the heart of humanity. The motives prompting this project lead me to doubt the wisdom of it. I believe that the Mexican people can only be raised and saved to civilisation by modern education. It is too late for the Church to attempt to lead them to the light. They must be reached by the modern material methods of societies elsewhere. A strong centralised government is essential first, but cannot be obtained by bloodshed and warfare. The immense tracts and deserts and mountain plateaux will first have to be conquered by the railroad and the telegraph, which will eliminate space and time. No government is possible throughout that vast region that is not in constant touch with every part of the country, however remote. The people must feel and know it. The Government must be forewarned of any impending danger, as only rail and wire can forewarn. No! Mexico cannot be saved by founding empires, or by beseeching God! It can be gradually conquered only by modern

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progress and the patience of enlightened man."

Baron James spoke forcibly, feelingly, then relapsing into his usual quiet manner he said, standing :

"Gentlemen, the proposition that has been placed before us this morning may require more elucidation. In any event, the house of Rothschild never renders a decision without due deliberation—certainly never on the same day on which a proposition is made. We think, however, that the proposal has been fully set forth, and need not to-day be further discussed."

All rose after the last words had been pronounced. Already Father Fischer had got his papers together and rolled up his charts. The ambassador addressed the Papal delegate for a moment; Lord Rothschild spoke a few words to the young Austrian; and then one by one the party left the room. Just as the senior prelate was about to withdraw Baron James called him to one side and said: "Who is this Father Fischer?"

III

ON the evening of the day on which the events of the preceding chapter took place the carriage of Lord Rothschild drew up before the door of the house of the French ambassador in London. His lordship and Baron James Rothschild alighted and entered the house. The ambassador received his guests, together with the young Austrian whom we have noticed that morning in attendance at the conference. After a few minutes of general conversation dinner was announced, and the four gentlemen entered the elegantly furnished and dimly lighted dining-room.

As they seated themselves, the ambassador said: "It is perfectly safe for us to speak in English upon any subject, as my servants have been so short a time in London that they haven't knowledge yet of the foreign tongue."

"A very good safeguard in the province of diplomacy," said Baron James, "but one that should not be too securely relied upon in matters of great moment. There is no easier dissimulation than that of ignorance of a foreign tongue, excepting that of deafness."

After a few minutes of further talk upon

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general topics of the day, a kind of fencing, or feinting, took place before the real object of the gathering was touched upon. At last the conversation was turned somewhat abruptly upon the subject of the morning's conference.

"I have never met the Archduke Maximilian of Austria," said Baron James in response to a question by the young Austrian, and then turning to the ambassador, "perhaps you can state to Lord Rothschild better than I the reason of his selection for the post of Emperor of Mexico by the Emperor Napoleon III."

"His Imperial Majesty Louis Napoleon," said the ambassador, after considerable pause, "realises that now is the time for him to establish more securely the predominancy of the Latin races upon the American continents. He has always looked forward to the decadence of the United States of America, and is now more fully convinced of the correctness of his judgment, in view of the bitter internal division which has culminated in the present civil war. He foresees the inability of the United States to advance further the cause of civilisation, and believes that his ideas are now capable of practical execution. He believes that for such a great country as Mexico, inhabited by a people of mixed blood and conflicting preferences, an empire is the

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most appropriate form of government ; and that the most available man is the Roman Catholic Archduke, Maximilian. As is well known to you, gentlemen, both England and Spain have withdrawn their troops from Mexico, accepting in settlement of their claims a payment of cash down and a further amount guaranteed by the Government banks. Therefore the Treaty of London is at an end, and the claims of France, regarding the vested interest of its people and bankers in the formerly authorised bond issues, remain unsettled and their fulfilment uncertain."

"How has this matter been presented to Maximilian?" inquired Lord Rothschild, who upon both occasions on which we have seen him proved himself an accomplished listener.

"In two ways," replied the Austrian. "First, in the same manner in which the situation of Mexico was first brought coherently before the Emperor in Paris, by the exiled representatives of the clerical party in Mexico, and also by overtures directly made to the Archduke by his Imperial Majesty. The Archduke has certain qualifications ; one scarcely yet needs to mention the primitive reasons. He is a Hapsburg—a Hapsburg descended from Charles the Fifth and Ferdinand and Isabella, the greatest rulers of the Spanish race. Moreover, he is of suitable

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personality, matrimonial connections, age and experience. He is an apprentice of the sea, an admiral of the Imperial navy of Austria, and a trained disciplinarian. He is an experienced traveller, a man of letters, having studied somewhat deeply and published his reflections, ambitious and——”

“I have an intimate acquaintance with my sovereign,” broke in Baron James, his manner of speech somewhat returning to that of the closing scene of the morning conference, “yet I am quite without influence with him in this matter, which, as it appears to me, is freighted with disaster.”

The attention of all present was somewhat abruptly drawn to the speaker, a man characterised by a singular quietness of manner.

“I say freighted with disaster,” repeated the Baron, “because I see no possibility of anything resulting from the scheme—except the preparation of the French troops that occupy Mexico for future Continental disturbances. I have come hither at the expressed wish of the French Emperor, to meet the delegates of the Roman Church and of Mexico, with a view to persuading our London house of the desirability of the loan, the discussion of which took place this morning. I have repeatedly warned the Emperor of the error in his conception of the condition of the

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United States of America, as distinguished from the Confederate States. There are certain things we bankers know, never from instinct, always from fact. The poet is born, not made ; the banker is made on the anvil of hard-hammered facts—facts which are fatal to idle imaginations and vain hopes."

The German-Hebrew face was strong in its intensified earnestness, though to none present were the motives apparent for his opposition to the entire scheme of Napoleon's meddling.

"I am entirely unaware," he continued, addressing the young Austrian on his right, who was Maximilian's representative at the London conference—"I am entirely unaware of the Archduke's interest in this business or of his knowledge of the whole problem that he is to solve—or rather, that he is expected to solve. You will tell him for me, since I have been drawn, or rather thrust, into this affair, that while there are some things plain in the light of subsequent events—and the faculty of divining these is common to us all—there are other things clearly impossible in the light of present events or facts, but it is not given to all to envisage these correctly. If the Archduke Maximilian accepts the proffered crown, he assumes a task impossible from the outset. Let him inform himself of the potency

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of the American Republic and of the trend of its traditions. Then let him look to the actual condition of Mexico itself, and not be led to lean upon its people, or allow his judgment of them to be influenced by his liking for the Spanish race in Spain, which his great ancestor so profoundly understood. In going to Mexico, he has to rule a people more accustomed to outlawry than to lawfulness, more prone to political revolution than to peaceful life, irresolute, greedy, treacherous, jealous of acquired power, and at all times desperate."

The Baron ceased speaking, the young Austrian murmured some polite responses and an assurance that the Baron's views should be correctly reported to his Highness Maximilian at Miramar, and the party broke up.

It was not given to Maximilian to hear more than a bare repetition of the Baron's words. If he could also himself have seen the grave and impressive manner with which they were delivered, it is doubtful whether he or his consort could have summoned courage to run counter to such a dramatic warning.

IV

IT was early in April 1864 that Maximilian awaited the arrival of the French ambassador to Austria at Miramar. With him sat the prelate of the Pope, whom we have already met at the banking house of the Rothschilds in London, the Jesuit priest, Father Fischer, ponderous, impressive, calm, and of aggressive presence, the Archduchess Charlotta of Belgium and her maid-in-waiting.

Their surroundings were such as would have lent a charm to any group of people. They were seated on a low balcony of stone, from which they overlooked the delightfully arranged gardens of the castle, rich now in the first flush of spring foliage and flowers. Here was everything that goes to make life agreeable—patrimony, estates, security, the respect of all classes, the assuredness of progress, the stability of a well-organised and mature government, the advantages of the refining influences of birth, of high position, political and social, the faculty of an appreciation of art, music and literature. Yet underlying this sense of assurance there was a certain restlessness—that inexpressible desire which bosoms ambition.

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Maximilian had just entered upon the thirties, the trying years of most men's lives. He was tall, fair and calm as he sat there on the broad edge of the stone terrace looking proudly at his wife. Father Fischer had just ended his narrative of Mexico. He had told them of his services in Texas, formerly a portion of the country. He had described the various districts of that vast tract which makes the Mexico of to-day; its great wastes of deserts, its great mountain ranges, its *tierras calientes*, where the tropics embrace the fertile hill-sides and bring forth from a generous soil a wide variety of fruits and flowers. He had compared the country in physical aspect to Andalusia in Spain, with the manners and customs of the ancient land engrafted upon a mixed race in the New World. He had dwelt upon the various motives of life among them, the great work of the Church of Christ amidst the people of New Spain, their spirit of faithfulness, the indifference they had shown to the political revolutions which again and again had swept over them; and then he had described the great extent of coast-line on two oceans, their harbour fastnesses, where mountains and seas met and agreed to hold and protect the commerce and the fleets of all nations.

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It was here that Maximilian had interrupted to question the narrator upon the many harbours on the Pacific coast, and their fitness for sheltering the commercial fleets that might in the future be reared to make the nation great. The thought of the possibilities of bringing to the western shores of Mexico the great commerce of the East, India, Australia and China, appealed to the trained sailor. It aroused him from a dream, and brought out the inquisitiveness of the ambitious mariner.

Father Fischer, with a positiveness and insinuation so convincing as to lead one to believe him a statesman rather than a priest, had dilated upon the subject with fervour and a semblance of well-authenticated facts. The picture he had drawn of the great East at the door of the New West was indeed alluring.

"Nothing is wanting," said Maximilian finally, "but the iron road, with its snorting horse, to bring about the greatest of changes in these people. Modernism is the need of this country. We must give it at once the advantages of scientific development."

The Papal prelate moved uneasily in his chair, and made a casual remark to the Archduchess, who, replying irrelevantly, said to Father Fischer : "Tell me more of the city of Mexico. It

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interests me to know what the capital of this vast territory is like."

"Its situation," said the priest, "is very striking, for from any of its numerous streets may be seen a superb line of mountains in the distance. Its surface is level; its position one of defence, by reason of the lagoons surrounding it on all sides; and its population alert, animated by the many calls of civic life, and of a most picturesque appearance. It is," he continued, "a mixed population of Spanish-Aztec blood and—"

"I must interrupt," broke in Maximilian, "to remind the Archduchess that we are at present concerned with the supreme wish of these people, as to their form of government and their choice of a ruler, rather than with their trivial peculiarities."

"That," said Father Fischer, "is what I have to-day brought you, but which I have kept back until the ambassador of his Majesty the Emperor Napoleon should come here that we all might take official notice of it. That sanction by an undisputed majority, by a unanimous assent, has already been accorded to your Grace—your Majesty, Emperor of Mexico," he said, bowing, with impressive dignity.

"I must be very sure of this," replied Maximilian. "If I am to accept a throne so proffered,

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I wish that there be no drawback. It must be an unqualified desire that I should reign. Already I feel the call! Already I feel as if the hand of destiny had been stretched out to me, poor fluttering insect of a day that I am, calling upon me to rule over a people to whom my great ancestors gave the first knowledge of the Kingdom of Christ, and the first benefit of the civilisation of Christianity. If that call is manifested beyond question, it is agreeable to me to think with what pride, on rare and solemn occasions, from the height of the Mexican throne I shall glance downward over all the world and feel myself the first—like the sun of the firmament."

Father Fischer gave a significant glance at the Papal delegate, who had meantime been in the attitude of an appreciative and quiet listener. Just at that moment a liveried servant appeared at the door leading from the palace and announced the arrival of M. Charles Herbet, Minister Plenipotentiary in Austria to his Majesty the Emperor Napoleon, and M. Velasquez de Leon, who was acting as Minister of State to Maximilian. They had that day arrived from Paris, and came at the instance of Louis Napoleon.

Greeting the embryonic Emperor of Mexico with much formality, and addressing his consort

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with equal deference, they were bidden to be seated, and asked as to the long journey just completed. Maximilian inquired particularly of the health of Napoleon and of the Empress Eugénie, receiving satisfactory replies as to both. After a few minutes of general conversation, M. Herbet said :

"If your Majesty will allow me, I will proceed to read the agreement between yourself and his Majesty the Emperor Napoleon. It is important that this agreement be executed as soon as possible, in view of the news that has just reached us from Mexico to the effect that your Majesty's throne has been the free and, practically, the unanimous gift of the people. In other words, it is the will of the people that your Majesty should reign."

A look of gratification spread over the handsome face of Maximilian as he replied :

"Proceed ; we will listen." And then, bowing to the Archduchess—for as such he still addressed her—"My dear child, this is a very long and very dry matter. You will be called upon to listen to few such ; but it is my wish that you give it your uttermost attention, because it is—next to the sanction of the Mexican people—the most important factor in this affair. It is an agreement relating to an armed force which Napoleon is

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willing to put at our command in Mexico, and upon which for a few years, at all events, we must depend if we are to succeed in peacefully ruling these people from the first."

Charlotta listened attentively to the remarks, her face showing signs of suppressed excitement, though she said with calm sweetness and dignity : "I grasp the importance of it all, dear Max!" This was aside, as the Archduke had momentarily drawn her apart from the company.

Then turning towards the ministers, Maximilian said : "We are ready—quite attentive."

Thereupon M. Herbet, unrolling the document, read aloud :

"NAPOLEON, by the grace of God and the national will, Emperor of the French, to all who will see the present letters, Greeting :—

"A convention, followed by secret additional articles, having been concluded on April 10th, 1864, between France and Mexico, to settle the conditions of the sojourn of the French troops in Mexico, the said convention and secret articles are as follows :—

"The Government of his Majesty the Emperor of the French and that of his Majesty the Emperor of Mexico, animated with an equal desire to assure the re-establishment of order in Mexico, and to consolidate the New Empire, have re-

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solved to determine the conditions of the sojourn of the French troops in that country ; and have appointed to that effect, his Majesty Emperor of the French, M. Charles François Edouard Herbet, Minister Plenipotentiary of the first class, etc., and his Majesty Emperor of Mexico, M. Joaquin Velasquez de Leon, his Minister of State, without a portfolio, etc., who, after communicating their full powers to one another, those having been found to be in good and due form, have agreed upon the following articles :—

“ I. The French troops now in Mexico shall, as soon as possible, be reduced to a corps of 25,000 men, including the foreign legion. The corps, as a safeguard to the interests which have brought about the French intervention, shall temporarily remain in Mexico, under the conditions agreed upon in the following articles.

“ II. The French troops shall gradually evacuate Mexico, as his Majesty the Emperor of Mexico shall be able to organise the troops necessary to take their place.

“ III. The foreign legion in the service of France, composed of 8000 men, shall, however, remain for six years in Mexico, after all other French forces shall have been recalled under Article II. From that date the said legion shall pass into the service and pay of the

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Mexican Government, the Mexican Government reserving unto itself the right to shorten the duration of the employment in Mexico of the foreign legion.

"IV. The points of the territory to be occupied by the French troops, as well as the military expeditions of the said troops, if necessary, shall be determined under direct agreement between his Majesty the Emperor of Mexico and the Commander-in-Chief of the French corps.

"After determining in ten following articles the pay for troops, superiority of command, and the indemnity of money due the French, Article XIV. states: The Mexican Government agrees to indemnify the French subjects for the grievances unduly suffered by them, which caused the expedition.

"Then, in the additional secret articles, his Majesty the Emperor of Mexico has resolved to inform his people, by a manifesto, of his intentions in the matter. His Majesty the Emperor of France agrees that the actual, effective force of 38,000 troops shall only be withdrawn gradually, and from year to year, in such a way that the French troops remaining in Mexico, including the foreign legion, should be 28,000 in 1865, 25,000 in 1866, and 20,000 in 1867."

As soon as M. Herbet had finished reading,

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Father Fischer, always foremost to break silence and take the lead in conversation, turning to the Papal delegate and the delegate of the Mexican Church, said :

"A most thorough and satisfactory agreement. It will be impossible for misunderstandings to arise from it, and the forces will be ample for the maintenance and dignity of the Crown." Then, abruptly turning upon the Emperor, he said : "Now, if your Majesty will permit, Father Emanuel has here with him proof of the expressed sanction of the Mexican populace, which, with your Majesty's permission, he will read, as it is nothing more or less than a counterpart of this Treaty of Miramar, to which we have just listened."

"Yes," said Maximilian, "we wish to hear it, only let it be understood by all that once the reading is finished the Archduchess and I wish no further arguments produced. We shall be left alone, to reassemble with you at eight o'clock in the grand salon for dinner, when we will then render our final answer."

The prelates bowed deferentially, and proceeded to read from manuscript what purported to be an authentic account of the manner in which the practically unanimous opinion of the Mexican people had been rendered to the leaders

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of the clerical party, signifying their wish that the Archduke Maximilian of Austria should accept the throne of a Mexican Empire. It was adroit, sophistical, fawning, flattering, subtle and false. It was a conspired trick, backed by the sacred authority of the Church, and a most plausible and alluring one to him who was susceptible to the desire to rule, and a believer in the divine right of rulers.

Maximilian recalled his visit to Granada, his vague yearning for power, and his lack of opportunity to give effect to it. Now it had come to him unsolicited. Here were the clerical representatives of a great people bringing to him pledges of fidelity and the assurance of unified strength—a people of kindred blood to those of his beloved Spain, a people who had been transplanted from Spain to Mexico by his great ancestors, and directly governed by them through the centuries. Here was the manifest hand of destiny beckoning, and the manifest command of God to him direct. That wonderful visit to the graves of Ferdinand and Isabella years before came back freshly to his mind, with the vividness of the present, and seemed to hallow the entire undertaking. Could it have been a shadow of predestination made clear? Had the Almighty on that occasion illuminated his mind with the

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god-like ambition to rule over Mexico? Again the words came to him :

“ Methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday beam.”

Yes, the spirit of Charles V. and Philip II. had come down to him, had entered his nature, had demanded his action. A Ferdinand and a Hapsburg, the scion of the most exalted royal family in Europe, he felt himself called to rule and to raise a down-ridden people, over whom had swept a half-century of revolution, a people without friends or kindred of their own in the Western world. Upon their borders stretched the great republic of the north—a vague wilderness of debauched democracy in his eyes, who had never read “*Vox populi, vox Dei*” but to scoff at it!—with its heterogeneous religions, its free schools, its unbridled Press, and its present fratricidal war. He would unify Mexico; he would more gloriously than ever establish the one true Church of Christ upon the American continent; he would bring peace and prosperity, unity and happiness to a people who were his legitimate wards.

With these thoughts coursing through his brain, Maximilian stood there, long after the prelates had presented him with the call of the will of the Mexican people. No one stirred, till

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at length he reached out his hand to his beautiful wife and said : " Let us go and see if we have aught to leave behind in beautiful Miramar," and then, turning, they went out hand in hand.

Maximilian at this time was in possession of an ample private fortune and an income from the state. Miramar, down by the Adriatic coast, was his beautiful country seat. He had estates, friends and divers state functionary occupations. He was an admiral in the Austrian navy, a position that he earned through long and faithful service on the sea. He had travelled far and fervently, and had visited the Near East, Albania, Africa, Italy, and, to his supreme satisfaction, Spain, where his heart never failed to beat in quick response to the people who somehow always appealed to his finer nature. The man was not a dreamer ; he was a worldling, so far as an ardent and well-trained and mature Roman Catholic can be such ; but again and again his thoughts and longings had turned to his beloved Spain. He had never been in North America. Once he had voyaged to Bahia, and ascending the Amazon had penetrated far into the interior of that grand forest, the tropical luxuriance of which meant so much to his well-trained scientific mind. Of the United States of America he knew nothing. As was the case with many

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of his class in Europe, America, up to the opening of the civil war of 1861, had made no impression of any kind upon his mind or imagination. He knew its geographical situation vaguely. Its heterogeneous population he considered to be, if not the offscourings of Europe, at least made up of much that Europe had from the first been glad to be rid of. To the agricultural, commercial, political and scientific force of the United States he had never given a thought. Its Protestantism and Republican government he regarded (from his standpoint of one of a family possessing the divine right to rule) as well-nigh impious ; its inhabitants were chiefly known to him as a quasi-Christian people who publicly maintained slavery throughout their domain. Not a flattering idea this, to be held by an educated European. Yet with the exception of the English, and possibly also of the French, the United States had made no impression on the European mind until the outbreak of its civil war ; and indeed only recently we have had to resent the supposition that we only achieved the status of a first-class Power by reason of our acquiring the Philippines. The American conceit of its own importance is vast. Such, nevertheless, was the extent of Maximilian's enlightenment — with what result we shall see.

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Of Mexico he knew more, and had read more carefully, chiefly in books sanctioned and carefully revised by the Church of Rome. He believed Mexico to be a land of inexhaustible and varied resources. He thought that the landscape was much the same as that of Andalusia in Spain, which he knew well and loved so fondly. He conceived the people to resemble the Spaniards of the time of his ancestors, Ferdinand and Isabella, charged also with all the grandeur and savagery of the Aztecs, with whom they had mingled for four centuries ; and when this call came to him he imagined that it had come from God, who had destined him to rule over a Catholic civilised people of his own kindred. Yes, they needed him ! And he would raise them ! Was not the Church with him, behind him, before him, about him on every side ? And the French Emperor —upon whom the mantle of Cæsar had fallen—could he err ?

The attitude of Napoleon III. was different from Maximilian's. True, he wished to establish more firmly a Roman Catholic Latin-American race and empire in the Western Hemisphere ; but there was no fervent desire, as on Maximilian's part, to raise up, through Christian humanitarianism, an oppressed people.

Napoleon had had greatness thrust upon him ;

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and after he had acknowledged the thrust he discovered he was a Cæsar and therefore great; and he said: "Let me be great and do great things! I am, I can." He saw America in the throes of civil war the like of which had not been since Cæsar's time. Now it was his chance to hit the damned republic below the belt, or on the back of its head, while it bent to conquer its brother.

Then came the clerical exiles from Mexico, with their specious estimates of its strength based upon half-told truths. They understood the Emperor. They understood their own position thoroughly. They were active in Paris, because they knew the necessity for avoiding delay if their work in Mexico was to receive assistance. Never once did they develop the idea that it would be a good thing for themselves if Napoleon should send an army into Mexico, to forestall his project there; never once did they allow it to be seen that their scheme was greater and mightier than the Emperor's; they skilfully drew the picture pleasing.

When Maximilian and Charlotta passed from the castle terrace into the charming gardens, lying just to the south of the great structure, they walked for some time down the shaded walk to the water in silence. Maximilian was the

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first to speak. “Am I a soldier of fortune making his livelihood by fighting? No, I do not like the breed!—they who sell their worthless lives and merely exist from day to day. For honour, a man should give his property and his blood when the call comes; but to wander about the world, with arms, without any noble aims in view, is contrary to all my feelings!”

“But you, dear Max,” replied his wife, “are a sailor, and in accepting this great honour, pass from the list of wandering adventurers into the ranks of the few who sacrifice home and fatherland for the elevation of their adopted country.”

“It is a melancholy fact,” he said, “that we Austrians so quickly forget our nationality. Hatred and love alone remain impressed upon our minds. You call me a sailor! A true sailor has a right to be proud, for to him belongs the world. The ocean is his country. His mind knows no other boundaries than the globe. He is a citizen of every country. He is everywhere received kindly and with pleasure. In a continuous battle with danger his mind acquires earnestness and simplicity. Trained to deprivations, he remains child-like, and enjoys the most trifling pleasure with fresh love.”

“You are indeed philosophical, dear Max,” responded the Archduchess gently. “I lean

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upon you more than ever when you express yourself with so much reflection. I want to go to Mexico. I feel that it is an opportunity that comes to few. Much as I love you here, I shall be more your consort there, where we shall be the head—I, your Empress—over the great nation and the wonderful country of which we have heard so much. Here, where we have lived, we are in a secondary situation, and can never be more. We have nothing more to gain; and though in a position of luxury and ease, of which we cannot be deprived, we are in no way useful, and must live out our lives unconsciously. There, in the New World of Mexico, all will centre in us, and our aims and growth. We shall have royal position—pre-eminent—and must succeed. I will help you; we must accept the offer." Then with more eagerness she said: "This life is simple, and sweet, and happy; that before us is grand and calm, though perhaps unfinished. Yet I long for it and its great promises."

"My dear love," replied her husband, "once when I beheld Spalatro, I thought to myself, Diocletian was right in saying, 'Rather would I plant my pretty cabbages in Salonas in unruffled tranquillity than grasp again at the power whereby I was lord of the world, and thereby the most complete slave of all the children of the world.'

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He had the magnanimity to renounce fame, and he never regretted it."

"Yet that was said by one who had had power and wielded it wisely, and withdrawn in time. You have never yet tasted it and cannot put yourself in his place. Here you are the second son, and I a woman, merely—though of royal birth. Nature and repose alone attend us here. There, in Mexico, we have conquests—conquests—" She faltered, in the sheer ignorance of that situation.

Maximilian interrupted her. "I love Nature, even if bare and barren; but, reposing in her arms, especially love her holy peace, and gratefully thank the Creator of life for an entertainment such as the world of high life cannot give. It is then that one can understand how indescribable are the delights of those who count Nature as their only companion, and live a life of solitude. Only two other things can give similar or equal pleasure. They are the love of art and creative science."

"I don't understand you, dear Max," she said, again grasping his arm. "You have not always been so contented."

"Ah," he replied, "there you do misunderstand me. The soul does not want contentment, for in contentment lies the death of happiness."

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"Perhaps," he continued, slowly—slowly—releasing his arm, and half turning from her—"I must be alone. The Almighty Lord our God is far distant, and does not speak with the words of men; and his feats, even if one should be obliged to interpret them as punishment, would even be in favour of the irresponsible. Only those who have stood to the honourable path of rectitude stand unendangered." Then, facing her squarely, he went on earnestly: "My dear wife, I alone must bear the burden of this decision. You have cheerfully shared my life here. You will faithfully bear with me the burden, whatever my decision is. Alone—alone I will conclude, and bring my answer first to you."

He kissed her on the forehead, and turned her on her way back to the castle. She moved away almost mechanically, then stopped and said: "Dear Max, who is Father Fischer?"

The Archduke's face became fixed. "Dear child," he said, "enough for the present."

"Promise me, then," said the fair daughter of Belgium, "you, and not he, shall decide. I fear him only in this matter."

Maximilian turned and walked away to consider that decision which he had practically resolved upon from the first tendering of the

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alluring crown. The Archduke might be likened to a private individual to whom a fascinating business proposal has been made and who had entered upon the wild scheme of a financial investment which he did not understand, and upon false representation.

Night had quickly stolen down upon Miramar. The company had gathered in the great salon and feast was upon the board. The Archduke was fond of the pleasures of the table, and had given directions that the best from the larder and cellar should be served. The guests had assembled, the ambassadors in the costumes of the Court, the prelates in their dignified ecclesiastical robes, the secretaries in their uniforms, and the ladies in attendance in the splendour of the fashion and jewels of the day. The Archduke and his Duchess were the last to enter, and the soft, voluptuous strains of a Strauss waltz—then new to the Viennese—accompanied their entrance. All were standing, and greeted the couple in the manner of royalty.

“Let there be no further doubt of our position,” said Maximilian. “We go to my table with our decision rendered. We accept the responsibilities of the throne of Imperial Mexico.”

The delivery was dignified, ample, simple, yet profound. The ambassadors swept forward and

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saluted. The prelates advanced obsequiously, with the deference that had marked their bearing throughout the long negotiations. The die was cast—from this decision there was no returning. Then the great tapestries were drawn aside at the farther end of the salon and the entry made in state to the banqueting hall.

The entrance to that great room was made with the customary observations of pomp and etiquette that marks the manners of the Court of Vienna as pre-eminent above all others in Europe. There were the representatives of that Court in their magnificent uniforms; there were the splendid surroundings that lent dignity and prestige to the banquet—rich tapestries from the ancient ateliers of France, superb candelabra giving soft yet abundant light to those great masterpieces and affording as well a vision of the many historical portraits of the House of Hapsburg. At the farther end of the great room, and facing the position that Maximilian occupied at the table, hanging between two rich Gobelin panels, was an admirable replica of Titian's famous equestrian portrait of Charles V. On the great board itself were the candelabra that had been at the nuptial feast of Marie Louise and Napoleon I., whilst a profusion of beautiful flowers bowered the rich glass and porcelain

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ware that treasured the best of Bohemian workmanship.

The Archduchess, calm, dignified, radiant and especially grave, bore herself in marked contrast to the master of the house. The solemnity and fervour of his previous bearing had entirely passed off; an easy familiarity toward the immediate members of his household and guests—excepting always a reserve when in conversation with the clergy—now marked the man. His facial appearance and conversation were altogether those of a man of the world, familiar with the many phases of that world. Turning easily in his chair, immediately upon taking his seat, he reached forward and took the menu nearest him, and glancing casually at the outside said, with a show of levity :

“ My chef has entered into the spirit of my progress. Here are entwined the three flags now dearest to my heart—Austrian, Mexican and Roman.”

It was a graceful design, and received the praise of the guests nearest him, though the French ambassador looked somewhat critically upon the one which he too had taken from the place near by.

“ However,” continued Maximilian, opening his card, “ for a gastronome—nay, sybarite that

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I am—the true interest lies within. To an admirer of excellent cookery, everything must be eaten in season, at the right moment. How proud the French should be that they have a commanding language of the kitchen! One great pleasure in travelling is the discovery of the ingenuity of the culinary habits and pleasures of the nations. In Spain, so frequently avoided by travellers, because of the reported neglect of cuisine by the people of the country, I found that even in the time of Don Quixote, Sancho Panza proclaimed that the stomach was the seat of power."

"Probably discovered by Cervantes," broke in the ambassador, "after the frugality of prison fare had been well practised. I can conceive of no demon but hunger impelling many of the sentiments, thoughts and descriptions of the progress of the Don."

"I have had a mania for travelling," Maximilian continued, "though 'tis only well with me where the palm-trees wave. To a lover of nature, and an enthusiastic traveller like myself, that moment is never to be forgotten when one enters a new continent or an unvisited country."

"Which has most interested your Highness?" asked the wife of the French ambassador, who was upon his right.

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"Spain, more than any other," he replied. "Spain to me is a country beautiful in the extreme. It is a nation that is of my kindred, and the manners and habits of its people are intensely instructive. Then, too, the South with its charms has captivated me altogether. Those days passed in a warm country, in the midst of a vegetation rich in flowers and blossoms, I count amongst the most beautiful of my life. In the South one lives twice; the spirit, stirred by emotions, becomes richer and fuller; the body, which in the North is rendered inflexible by ice and iron, becomes in the South only flesh and blood."

"Your Highness has been in Rome, of course," said the Monseigneur, as an advocate who did not wish his home forgotten.

"Oh yes, the Eternal City never-to-be-forgotten, and the Sistine Chapel, with its Michelangelos,—indeed that is peerless. I first saw Italy at Naples—the Greeks in Italia. My second city was Florence—the home of the Medici; the former one of voluptuous, sensual beauty, the other like a high-souled, beautiful and intellectual woman. The family Medici particularly interest me, for they offer, with Venice, the only instance in history that men engaged in commerce can create and preserve great things."

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"The New World puts the works of the Medici to the blush," interrupted Father Fischer from his place well down the table, and so far away as to have given the impression that he was not aware of the foregoing conversation.

Instantly the entire party ceased talking and all eyes were bent upon the last speaker. He alone of that gathering was dressed in plain black and white, a feature itself striking. The ladies all withdrew into themselves, and more than one gave a silent shudder. The men who had previously met the priest all gave him some attention. Those among them who had not before seen him looked at him surprised, and some of them with critical contempt. There was that about him, which provoked a more or less acute sensation of repugnance, until the intellectual power of the man asserted itself above paltry prejudice.

"The New World," said Father Fischer, "has its Medici in every principal capital of the West. Its merchant princes have, besides welcoming with ample purse the stored wealth of art from the Old World, reared institutions to the glorification of God and learning which will be as imperishable as the Alpine heights. No country in Europe can match the public spirit to-day which prevails throughout the

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length and breadth of the United States of America."

The remarks might have been variously taken by his hearers. With the exception of the emissaries from Mexico, all present were Europeans, and Continentals at that. Maximilian (who was wholly without ideas upon the material growth of the United States), being in an entirely convivial mood, hastily broke in by saying :

" My maxim, in things which don't particularly trench on dogma, is that everyone may believe in them who finds pleasure in doing so, and that I am much too insignificant to mete out the faith of other souls."

The remark was not especially relevant to that made by the priest, but it was delivered with such easy grace and good nature that it seemed with its abnegation to dismiss an argument without abruptness.

" Did you find much similarity between Spain and Portugal? " asked the French ambassador.

" None, " said Maximilian. " Spain grew to maturity like the ripening corn in the autumnal frosts, while Portugal was a splendid tropical plant which grew to perfection rapidly. But, casting aside all prejudice, one must arrive at

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the conclusion that the weak, intolerant government of Portugal permitted the Jesuits to hold the reins of power too exclusively and too completely."

It was unfortunate that, as he made this remark to the questioner, Maximilian did not see a shaft shot from the dark, deep-set eyes of the Jesuit priest. Charlotta, his consort, saw it, though she had not heard the Archduke's address. From her end of the banquet board she had watched the priest ever since he broke in upon the lighter conversation that had characterised the evening. It was a look she never forgot, and from which she may have drawn some lessons. To her the man was a constant source of indefinable irritation and distrust. By what authority he had come into the negotiations leading up to the Treaty of Miramar, she was unaware; and she resolved to question her husband again about him as soon as she had a favourable opportunity.

"It is an unexplained fact," said Maximilian, when the conversation had turned upon Spain, "that one of England's greatest travellers in the fore-part of the century never visited Granada and the Alhambra. The Alhambra is one of the greatest ruins that have been preserved to modern times; and it is to be

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regretted that that great architectural jewel set in the crown of Granada is not described by the pen of Byron."

"It could hardly have been because of its remoteness from Malaga and the other seaports," said the Monseigneur, "for if I remember correctly, the journeys the English poet made in Asia Minor, to Ephesus, and in Albania, were more perilous and much farther by land."

"Yes," replied the Prince, "Granada was fairly accessible in his day, and portions of Spain that Byron visited almost as inaccessible. I love to read the descriptions of Spanish scenery and life in *Childe Harold* — even his weird picture of the bull-fight."

"And did you enjoy the Alhambra as much as the Alcazar?" asked the Austrian secretary.

"The Alhambra did not altogether come up to my expectations," responded Maximilian, with growing interest. "Perhaps I was saddened and rendered thoughtful by my visit first to the Cathedral in the city of Granada, where rest my great ancestors; but it was too small, too neat, too finished in detail of great and elaborate fineness, too confined—it was not royal enough. I missed bold lines and imposing proportions." He was thinking of the am-

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bitious, though abortive, palace of Charles V. that threatened the poetical metres of the Alhambra.

"I once spent a night in the Alcazar. Shakespeare dreamed *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, Mendelssohn heard the echoes of its music and song, I have seen it realised." He paused, for the first time since coming to the board, and reflected seriously.

"To me," said the Monseigneur, "the Alhambra is more than an ordinary and well-adorned habitation : it is an elaborated architectural poem, so wonderfully directed in all its lateral spacings and gradations that the mind retains it as a sympathetic thought expressed in expressive verse. With the exception of the great Gothic churches of the Middle Ages, the structure has not its equal ; only with this difference, that the spirit of Gothic is expressed in altitude, whereas the builder among the Moors swept low and long, with lingering light to the end."

"Teeming with human interest and history, these great works are indeed impressive," replied the Archduke directly; "but after all is said and done, it is the language of nature that frightens the conscience of man and convinces him of his vanity. No one more often put this lesson to the test than Lord Byron, although I agree with your reverence that in the Gothic churches one

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can pray so purely and with such Christian strength and faith overshadowed by the eternal spirit of God."

"It is because one is there upon consecrated ground," broke in Father Fischer."

And thus the conversation drifted, now gay, then serious, usually relieved by an historical allusion, or illuminated by an apt quotation from a bygone traveller. They were mostly all denizens of the world that their language on that occasion conducted them through, with the newly elected Emperor naturally inclined to the gay side of it all, and the centre of the talk at his end of the banquet board.

V

THE events that followed Maximilian's acceptance of the Mexican throne, prior to his actually taking up the reins of government, were interesting in the extreme. First came the farewell at Court, and the renunciation of the Archduke's birthright, including the right of succession to the Austrian throne. Then the departure for Mexico, with a visit to the Pope, where the now royal couple went to seek the benediction of the head of the Roman Church, and to receive his authority for their mission.

It is but a slight divergence, if we consider the distance from Trieste to Vera Cruz, for a visit to Rome from Naples, whither the now quasi-royal couple proceeded. The map of the world shows it clearly, and it would seem but a slight matter to turn aside from the course of so long a voyage. It was an admirably arranged climax to the final departure upon so grand an errand—that visit to the head of the greatest of all Christian churches.

It was George Meredith who first used the expression, "the irony of fate." It is a singular fact that we bestow the most excellent judgment,

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the most thorough consideration, upon our worldly plans, thinking not to leave a loophole for chance; and then fate steps in and decrees otherwise—sometimes. So, perhaps, it will be if we too carefully prepare for the Christian heaven.

To the casual observer there is nothing in Maximilian's preparations that was not wise, careful and just. His birth, rearing, training, purpose and opportunity were excellent for the undertaking, from his point of view. With the Pope's blessing secured every step was complete. There were but two factors that were beyond his reach—one, the Mexican character, and the other—ever beyond his comprehension—the growth of the American Republic in its entirety, materially and constitutionally.

Disembarking from the Austrian warship *Novara* upon the quay at Naples, Maximilian and the Empress had but one attendant—the ubiquitous Father Fischer. It was the wish of the Papal delegate, who had remained at Miramar, that he should accompany them to Rome, so that, as the representative of the Mexican Church, he might be able, as of his own knowledge, to relate to the Mexicans the manner of the Pope's benediction. To Maximilian, the disposition was entirely agreeable; to Charlotta, the constant association with the holy Father

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allayed some of the distrust of his character formed from the first meeting.

Father Fischer was not a talkative man ; he was usually of extreme reserve, though always approachable. He was a man of thoughtful appearance, deeply absorbed, oblivious of environment ; but his personality was one of singular aggressiveness to certain natures, communicating a feeling that his thought, although reserved within himself, was like a concealed blade beneath a cloak, ready to penetrate the brain or body.

The journey by land was accompanied by the slight fatigue customarily visiting travellers from Naples to Rome to this day. Whether it is because one is just fresh from the sea, or because the constantly recurring scenes of ancient times so excite the interest, it is difficult to say. Charlotta had never made the journey before ; and as Maximilian had made it prior to the days of the railroads, his love of travel rendered him an excellent guide and companion on this occasion. The journey was much as the tourist of to-day makes his first visit to the Eternal City, with the expectancy of a suppressed hope, and the reverence that things essentially Roman will produce upon the mind.

The visit was begun at the railway station, for there the Pope's Swiss Guard and chamberlains

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were assembled, to lend a dignity to the occasion. Maximilian's suite was not to come from Naples till the following day, when they were to be present at the Sistine Chapel, where his Holiness the Pope was to deliver his final blessing. The royal couple were at once driven to the Vatican, where they were ushered to private rooms that had been prepared for them, and were informed that the Pope would receive them just before the dinner hour in the Grand Reception Room. Only one person of that great assembly which was present when the Emperor and Empress entered was to withdraw with them to the table.

Contrary to the custom of royalty, his Holiness was awaiting the arrival of his guests. The magnificent room was dimly lighted with candles, setting off not only the rich gold and cardinal red decorations of the salon, but rendering still more striking the uniforms of the officers of the Swiss Guard posted about the doorways. No music accompanied the entrance of the new monarchs ; no train of retainers followed them ; hand and hand they walked slowly forward to where Pius IX. was seated, and then reverently knelt before him in silence. A benediction from afar was read in sonorous voice, and as the royal couple arose they, with the Pope and his prelate, were alone ; all the others had vanished as by the waving of a wand.

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His Holiness now arose and greeted them informally, and with the uttermost good nature, and then conducted them through the short corridor that leads to the state *salle à manger*. It was a mammoth room for a small coterie, but so successfully illuminated that all the light fell upon the magnificently furnished board, upon which the richest of ware lent a radiancy of surpassing beauty.

Charlotta was the first to break the silence that followed the seating.

"Your Holiness has given us great pleasure by this visit before our long sea voyage," she said, with her customary graciousness.

"Is your Majesty a good sailor?" irrelevantly replied the Pope.

"Yes, particularly," said the Empress; "and, indeed, I have good need to be, for the voyage we are undertaking is well-nigh five thousand miles."

"Your Majesty has good company, I trust, in addition to the Emperor, who will naturally be much taken up *en route* with the preliminary affairs of state."

"Yes, your Holiness," broke in Maximilian, "we have an excellent suite accompanying us over the ocean, and time, with your Holiness's benediction upon us, will pass both cheerfully and

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instructively. Her Highness is fortunately a sailor's wife, in every sense of the word; and besides loving the rolling waves is a boon companion *en voyage*—even, I believe, to the remarkable Abbé Fischer," he added, after a moment, with a sly look at his wife, whose attention he held.

"Ah!" said the Empress, "your Holiness will be so good as to enlighten me upon the one personality I cannot quite comprehend—Father Fischer," she said, smiling inquiringly at the Pope, who had reached out his hand upon the table towards her.

"Ah! the Abbé Fischer, my daughter. Does he so much interest you, then?"

"Indeed he does, your Holiness," said the beautiful woman, her head serenely erect and with graceful pose. "Indeed this man coming into our mission interests me—not from a stand-point of personality, but from a desire to know why one—although a Romanist—who is neither a Mexican, nor a Spaniard, nor an Italian, should speak upon our undertaking with such authority and determination. Curiosity perhaps your Holiness would term my interest, but," continued the beautiful, though always earnest and sometimes austere, woman, "I deny that curiosity is my motive in seeking this information—

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impelling demon that it may be, as is the thirst for knowledge generally."

The prelate spoke for the first time. It was evident that the Pope had never heard of the Abbé Fischer.

"If your Holiness will permit me," bowing with a most agreeable social manner towards him, and then turning, "your Majesties, the Abbé Fischer has been chosen by high authority as the secret adviser of Maximilian, the Emperor of Mexico."

"If only the secret advisers of rulers did not exist," responded Maximilian, "it would be better for the world. I have asked for none, I am sure. They incite and they complain, but they run away like cowards when danger comes. Bigotry and cowardice are sisters."

"Let us hope," said his Holiness simply, "that there are no cowards in the service of Christ. That there are dangers ahead of us upon the Western continent, where our Church prospers, none will deny, just as there are perils on the deep where the Lord our God rules supreme—but cowards with Christ there cannot be. Your Majesty is going among an extremely revolutionary people, but as there is some soul of greatness in things evil, so I hope you will pluck the flower of safety forth from it."

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"Great nations create great governments," said Maximilian. "We comprehend the greatness of the world because we always find something new in it. The nations do not exist for the sake of the rulers, but the rulers for the sake of the nations. I hope to create a stability of government in Mexico such as in modern times it has never enjoyed. The position of sovereigns and princes is not based on old customs alone, but is, as well, a result of their own efforts and labour."

"Your Majesty shall ever have the aid of the Church," said his Holiness, smiling, and bowing deferentially and approvingly to the sentiments expressed by the young Emperor, who, apparently absorbed in his theories, took only the due and proper notice of the Pope's compliment, and continued earnestly:

"Revolutions begin with beautiful words, and end in blood. Revolutions cause emotion but not happiness. Freedom within lawful bounds is the best remedy against revolution. The law protects against pressure from above and revolutions from below."

"Yet," replied his Holiness, now challenged, or at least put upon his guard, "the winners of a revolution have little to show for the risks."

"The winners of a revolution!" exclaimed

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Maximilian. "Who are the winners of a revolution?—the schemers who understand how to use the masses, and the blood of the masses, for their own purposes?"

"There is France," began the Pope, beginning to feel that he was enlisted in an argument.

"The iron mask of France," interrupted the Austrian, "is a bitter irony, the most appropriate in the life of a prince. France, like all democracies, has been in a constant state of revolution since the fall of Louis XVI. The Court stoops to the dust, with the key to the mask in the pocket."

The prelate turned to the Empress and said jestingly: "We need Father Fischer here as a secret adviser to the Emperor."

Charlotta made no reply; she had followed closely the conversation, though neither she nor the prelate had entered upon it—both were interested, both comprehended it. The Bourbon prejudice against revolution stood fast, but was not weighed in the balance.

"What I wish to bring about," continued Maximilian, "is the reliability of the individual in Mexico. You may call it honour, or the sense of establishment or family, inclination, or hackneyed honesty; but once establish individual strength of character, based on habits of decency, and you

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have come to progress. The peoples of this earth must have modern forms of government. We have in our time great material developments, scientific developments, to answer for. The progress of development in the life of nations is an immense, incessant stream. The really great men turn their eyes towards this stream, study its strength and direction, and then dig a bed for it for the future, and direct its course. Ordinary men sit at the bank of the stream and moan on account of its strength and speed. Fools put up a barricade, and are washed away, and leave, as a share of inheritance, an inundation behind them."

"There can be no doubt," replied the Pope, "that we are living in an age of material systems, as in the past we have lived in an age of spiritual systems; but that does not sanction material abandonment of the spiritual. Perhaps we are living in an age that is constantly losing its sensitiveness of sin; that does not render sin any less reprehensible. The barriers against sin are not the fields of progress—they are the realisation of an ever-present Christian faith, which the true Church and its glorification of God alone can teach and create."

"I admit that, and my devotion to the Church shall witness it. But, nevertheless, in a growing

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nation modern materialism must obtain. Take, for example, railroads. They are signs of equality, the ever-growing levers of socialism, which cannot be laid aside. Having railroads and telegraphs at hand, one rules according to the inspiration of the moment. That my people shall be religious is my earnest hope; but I want them to be something more than religious. Don't say that religion is good for the people. That is the most infamous arrogance or the greatest lack of conscience. The man of conscience who speaks like that has the same moral standing as the slave-holder. Religion, if it be at all good, is good for all."

It was man to man now. There was neither pope nor prince at the board, but simply two men who spoke with earnestness of expression, coupled with design—a design either born of imagination and high ambition, or of subtle craft and training.

"We believe," said his Holiness, after a moment of reflection, "in the propagation of religious learning, especially among the masses. We believe in the propagation of learning especially among the classes. We believe in the propagation of religion among the classes and the masses equally."

"Yes," said Maximilian, following closely his

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bent of mind, "religion based on duty is a necessity, comforting man and offering the only means of preserving his mental equilibrium. Religion based on strong emotion is a passion, like any other, and usually degenerates into fanaticism, tormenting and torturing its victim, frequently, however, passing into the opposite extreme. If, as I believe, the Mexican character can be stimulated to take courage from contact with modernity, Mexico, with its splendid soil and climate and opportunity, may become a world-power. Its centuries of religious teaching should by now be ingrained; and its people, relieved of too much Church dictation, rise to the call of progress—political, scientific and literary."

The Pope and prelate interchanged significant looks, but neither spoke. We will give this man more rope, they thought, and find the bent of his mind.

"My husband," remarked the Empress, "has assumed his new responsibilities because he is ambitious to bring to bear upon a nation capable of responding to modern ways the excellent qualities with which his birth and rearing have endowed him." She said it with the endorsement of pride; her eyes flashed, her cheeks flushed.

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"My ambition, your Holiness, is quite in keeping with our Church and creed," resumed Maximilian. "It is dangerous when ambition takes entirely the place of religion, because we are then ready to fall martyrs to a false faith. While upholding the faith of the true cross of Christ, nevertheless I believe a government's policies must always be based upon prosperity, material prosperity to be understood by the people, and supported by everybody; and this is the form of government I would take to the Mexicans. Personal sympathies and antipathies must never have any influence. We can show those feelings at home; but we must not make the majority dependent on our private feelings. That kind of government is mostly found among men who are either worn out, or who have always been kept in leading strings.

"On the other hand," he continued, "we all come from God, and have the right to act as independent beings within the bounds set by society. The man who does not acknowledge the subjectivity of his fellow-beings is, and will always be, a despot. Conquerors of the world have always looked upon the masses as things. At the time when human sacrifices took place, men of that kind were considered gods; now they are only thought to be a

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flagellum Dei. I go forth as a peaceful ruler, to take to the Mexicans what degree of statesmanship and moderation God has given me; and I trust, with the benediction of your Holiness, to find the Mexicans receptive."

"Your Majesty shall have my benediction upon your great undertaking," responded the Pope fervently. "It is only my purpose to interpose a word of caution against too profuse plans."

"Too many schemes," quickly replied Maximilian, "bury order and consistency. I am moved to-night to talk freely of my designs, because I am in the presence of your Holiness, and I desire to make my ambitions and my hopes clear and defined, so that co-operation may be between us. I desire to put my extreme views frankly, rather than to maintain that I set forth on this extraordinary mission purely as an emissary of the Church of Rome. That is not so, nor do I believe your Holiness so desires. I wish to benefit by my frankness, and I therefore am perfectly free. Otherwise, the frank word will become the flattering transition of despotism. I admit that it is not good to make experiments with nations. But we are to apply in Mexico forms of modern civilisation well established in Europe

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to the transplanted Spanish stock in the Western Hemisphere. Something has warped it from its true direction. I cannot say what has done so; but it is my mission to ascertain and to reshape. The nation has been in revolution, yet it has not been exposed to any individual despotism that I am aware of. Despotism requires the highest intellect, and consistency as hard as iron. Despotism dies with the personality. One man's despotism is difficult to stand. I am not aware that Mexico has suffered from it. But the despotism of a caste is insufferable; and is always, sooner or later, shaken off—even if it be cloaked in the form of religion."

In Maximilian's discourse there had been two veiled hints that had surprised his host—the allusion to the masked French monarchy, and now this allusion to a despotism of a caste or party in Mexico. Pius IX. was well aware of the grasp the Church had had upon the Mexican people, and of its vast holdings of property throughout the country. Nothing adverse to it emanating from Maximilian had ever been reported to him. The latter's slur upon the Jesuit authority in Portugal, at his own table at Miramar, had been duly reported to the Vatican by the Abbé Fischer; but it had not reached the ear of the Pope, as it was

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unimportant. The Vatican had insisted upon the appointment of an emperor of Mexico who should be a Roman Catholic Bourbon prince. This it had amply secured in the person of Maximilian. It was not unreasonable then to suppose that the Emperor Maximilian carried his head higher than that of the Emperor Napoleon. A cardinal inborn belief of the Hapsburgs was that they held the divine right to rule, and none of Corsican blood could truly possess such. What Pius IX. most considered was Maximilian's allusion to the despotism of the clergy. This he regarded as seriously objectionable, and upon retiring with his prelate discussed the subject far into the night. It was on the morrow he was to preach upon the Emperor's field of usefulness in the New World.

As Maximilian and his wife separated from the Pope, Charlotta, taking his arm with her customary quiet manner, said: "My dear Max, you surprised me by your freedom with his Holiness, your monopoly of the conversation and lack of humility. Was it altogether wise?"

"I had a design in my course," he said, with the impression of his task still upon him. "Humility and modesty can become the greatest and most dangerous fault of a prince and thereby bring disaster on the world. There are feelings

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which are virtues in one class, crimes in another, and only conventional humbug in a third. A sovereign must, for his country's sake, not be modest in his position, otherwise he loses—together with his own dignity—that of the State. He must not be modest as to his own merits or talents, or else they are confined within too narrow limits for the welfare of his country."

"You certainly practised your theory, my darling husband," replied the Archduchess, smiling.

"Yes," said Maximilian, in sympathetic mood, his serious expression vanishing in her presence, "yes, it was my opportunity to preach to-night to the Pope of Rome—to-morrow he will have it entirely his own way."

They were standing upon a balcony, overlooking the Vatican gardens. It was nearly midnight; the moon had risen to a point where the shadow of St Peter's dome fell upon the large fountains of the garden, and then illuminated with great brilliancy the ample walks and shrubbery, almost forsaking the rest of the enclosure. The weather was sweetly soft and soothing; all was still save the deeply shadowed water that sprang in the fountains.

Maximilian, who stood there with his hand

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upon Charlotta's, noticed a slight quivering, and turning towards her, looked inquiringly into her eyes. She was beautifully erect and elegant in her bearing, dignified, and outwardly calm. Her eyes met her husband's resolutely. It was a moment for love, not controversy—a moment when two familiar souls pass into eternal embrace, amidst never-to-be-forgotten circumstances and surroundings. Suddenly the entire manner of the woman changed.

"I will go back to Belgium to-morrow after the services," she said abruptly. "You go your way overseas, I will go to my native land. I have no secret advisers. Why should you? Repeatedly my suspicions have arisen regarding the Abbé Fischer. Repeatedly I have sought to know his connection with our great task. Repeatedly I have demanded some explanation of his constant intrusion into our presence. And as repeatedly, by my high lord, and my holy Father, my simple questions have been ignored."

Maximilian in alarm quietly protested; but the woman was aroused. Was it anger?

"I shall decline to be the dupe of conspirators," she said, still more earnestly, and in tones a trifle raised above her customary speech. "I shall refuse to be one of the dupes of a parvenu monarch and a priest. We live in the century

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of the crowned humbug ; and no Bourbon shall be under its spell."

The fire darted from her eyes, the cheeks of usually healthy glow grew pallid ; even in that pale light of the moon it might be seen that the entire aspect of the woman had changed from the calm serenity of majesty to the fury of a tigress. She stepped away from her husband a short space, and, looking at him as if about to spring upon her prey, exclaimed again :

" I will ask no more about this secret adviser. I will watch him, follow him, confuse him, and I will strangle him. For me, I know he is vermin. I am aware of his insinuations. I am constantly preyed upon by his cunning ; and I will not have it."

Contrary to the expectations of her husband, who was about to step forward and explain Father Fischer's relation with their affairs so far as his knowledge went, the woman advanced to him, and quickly taking his hand, raised hers to brush back the beautifully lustrous locks from her forehead, and kissed him softly upon the lips, saying :

" Dear Max, this is one of the most glorious of nights, and one of the most charming of experiences. I have been enchanted. It has fascinated me. I am quite transported out of

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myself! Is there no way by which we may descend to the garden itself from this terrace, and take advantage of the one chance of our lives to spend a night in the vast vestibule of the Vatican garden before we seek our new home?"

He drew her closely to him, and they stood for a long while lovingly, looking upon the retreating, shrinking shadows of St Peter's as they drew off from the fountain.

Your mind is as firm as iron,
Your heart pure gold,
Your soul a diamond,
Constantly pure and true.

Early in the morning of the day on which the service was to be held in the chapel of the Vatican, Maximilian was abroad in the gardens. He had walked but a short time when he was accosted by the Abbé Fischer, whom he greeted cordially. Singular as it may seem, Maximilian had no curiosity whatever regarding the priest. Even the singular tirade of his consort the previous night had not led to such a feeling. His was a nature that formed opinions as to men and things and institutions readily enough, but at times was a complete blank as to others. Though in daily communication with the priest now for more than a

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month, Maximilian never gave him a thought when out of his sight. He had literally formed no opinion of him whatsoever. The priest's personality was not repulsive to the Emperor. That was sufficient.

After the casual greeting, Father Fischer respectfully addressed his companion upon the probable text of the sermon of the Pope. Whereupon Maximilian replied :

" How rarely is the foundation of self-reliance to be found, upon which alone a ruler can maintain his position, so as to bring a blessing ! How rare the quiet, penetrating eye, which is of more service to a monarch than the wisest of counsellors or secret advisers, and with which he can discern good advice from bad, and integrity from deceit."

The priest winced perceptibly, and then, as if to change the subject, said :

" Will your Majesty accompany me to the piazza of San Pedro, and view the morning supplicants at their devotions ? "

" No," said Maximilian most courteously, " I could not summon courage to mingle with the throng. In moments of deep feeling the excited soul ever flees from the troubling hum of men. Does not the bridegroom desire to see for the first time his destined bride in the stillness

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of solitude? In moments of excitement, the overcharged heart needs seclusion; because, to grasp happiness to the full, man must be able to concentrate his powers." Then, as if tendering the priest a quasi-explanation, or apology—an impression which long remained with the Father unexplained, so abrupt and apparently irrelevant was his change of manner as well as of subject—the Emperor said: "Anyone may go mad. The line between sanity and insanity is as fine as that between life and death, even finer. Death may come at any moment—insanity instantly."

The remark was one to which all might give assent, and one that were best effective when irrelevant. Few of us who have been deeply moved by the crises of life will fail to recall an approach to that narrow dividing line—a recollection, however, well kept to ourselves.

The sermon which Pius IX. preached in the Sistine Chapel to the young monarchs of the new Mexican Empire was not only the greatest effort of the kind of his eventful life, but one of the most impressive that had ever been pronounced from that pulpit. The entire suite of the Emperor were with him, and beside the existing household of the Pope, the Vatican

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staff and the resident clergy of Rome were all summoned thither. Its great benefit to the monarch was that it was inspired by hope. Not only was the salvation of those present assured, but the errand upon which they went beyond seas was to bring a perpetual blessing upon their fellow-men in Mexico. They were to have great designs. They were to extend the realm of the Christian unity of the Roman Church throughout the confines of Mexico and into the uttermost recesses of the vast continent they were to visit. A reaction of late years had set in against that propagandism. Now God in his infinite wisdom had selected and anointed anew a scion of the most suitable of all ruling families of the world, to go forth from country and home to carry a beneficent rule to a people capable of the most complete development both spiritual and material. The Church of Christ—the only true Church—already preceded them; and they were to take up the task of progress, not where the Church had left off, but where the Church had already led up to; and they were to continue there hand in hand, with complete harmony and growing confidence.

His Holiness then dwelt upon the utility of humility of soul and the contrite spirit, which should ever accompany material effort. With

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that co-operation an Empire would grow up second to none in Europe, second to none in the world. The young monarchs would be the creators of it; they would be the benefactors of mankind, beloved, believed in, and bidden to higher attainments.

Eloquently did the Pope dwell upon the grandeur of the conception of the Empire, the vast territory, the great population, already communicants of the true Church, and of the grand resources which an abundant soil and a salubrious climate rendered possible. Then, as if drawing the picture to a conclusion, he spoke of the ease with which all this could be done with God at their right hand. Only by constant communication with the Church could this errand be consummated; but with the self-abnegation, ever the attendant attitude of successful monarchs, the task of Maximilian and his Empress was assured.

Finally, turning to the pages of history, he indicated the foundation of Church and State, by the great ancestors of Maximilian, in the remote regions of the Antilles and Americas, insisting that God had directly selected this man, so conspicuously descended from the Catholic throne of Ferdinand and Isabella, as the one ordained to conduct the Mexicans to a high state

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of civilisation and Christianity. No benediction could have been more complete, or hope of brighter hue held out to the youthful monarchs departing on their distant journey. It was absolute.

VI

ON three widely separated continents, leading from the most famous seaport of each nation to its capital, is a highway of singular interest, each traversing a territory of fine landscape, and passing through districts which show to the traveller almost every phase of manners and customs of the people inhabiting them. They are literally panoramic of three nations.

The first is the grand route from Alexandria to Cairo, displaying every phase of the daily life and civilisation of Egypt. The second is that doleful entrance at the mouth of the Pei-ho river in China, by Taku and Tien-Tsin, and thence over that vast cultivated and inhabited plain to the walled gates of Pekin, where barbarism stares one in the face. The third is the journey from Vera Cruz, on the Gulf of Mexico, to the city of Mexico, traversing which one sees almost every phase of Mexican life. To state that it is the most striking of the three great routes mentioned is quite within the bounds of truth. With the addition of the railroad and the architecture *en route*, the tourist of to-day sees the same scenery in all its magnificence that

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Cortez and his followers saw four hundred years ago ; and so little change has come upon the manners and customs of the people that all through that tropical belt the traveller of to-day sees what Cortez and his followers saw and had to overcome. Amid such surroundings one's thoughts readily fall back into the past, and rest upon almost any notch in history—Cortez, the vice-regal era, the period of American invasion, the landing of Maximilian, or the introduction of the railroad and its adjuncts.

All travellers arrive off Vera Cruz in much the same state of mind. Perhaps it is the peculiar and agreeably soothing effect of the most salubrious of all climates on earth that greets the voyager of tempestuous seas as he begins the ascent towards the interior. The temperature just meets one's moods, the scenery kindles admiration, without inciting awe. The vegetation shows almost a phase of perpetual spring upon it, with all its fruitful promise to fulfil.

As when I stood beneath the fresh green tree,
And saw around me the wild fields revive,
With fruits and fertile promise, and the Spring
Come forth her work of gladness to contrive,
With all her reckless birds upon the wing,
I turned from all she brought to those she could not bring.

Through tangles of protecting trees that hedge

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plantations of coffee, and spices, and fruits, and the weeds men smoke, burst forth the aborigines *en route* straight across country. Here are the same Indian tribes that opposed Cortez, and welcomed each subsequent invader—Indians, fairly hearty, though full of indifference. With their great sombreros and zerapes, they are interesting, swarthy, sullen and respectfully distant.

More history has been made upon that short route of a hundred and eighty miles than upon any other route, regardless of its length, on the American continent. It is still the most picturesque, the most fateful, the most enchanting of any in the Western Hemisphere. None who have traversed it ever have it out of memory's reach, and all wish to make it just once again—favourably.

Maximilian's arrival at Vera Cruz was years in advance of railways. The lover of Spanish scenery, architecture and people must, perforce, be captivated by the low-lying city of the true cross. It stands there by the sea, with its barren plains in the background, a commercial sentinel to the grand regions behind it, with its numerous mosque-like domes, silent in its simplicity. It was the first time in history that royalty had made the journey. However

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informed the natives were of the meaning of their journey, they greeted the monarchs with so much of cordial enthusiasm as is in their nature. The clergy had informed them of the coming of the new rulers, and with respectful bearing the great gathering of the descendants of the Aztecs greeted them at the approach to every principal city visited on the route.

How different all was from the great centres of European population! Scenery, cities and people were strikingly unlike what the travellers had seen elsewhere. The royal party's ascent to the plateau of the Mexican valley was slow and tortuous, yet it was entertaining, and at times exciting. To Maximilian the similarity to his beloved Spain constantly occurred. To all the others, even to Charlotta, it was simply novel. There were the many species of a strange vegetation, the innumerable cacti, the great barren reaches between stations as they ascended higher and higher up the mountain-sides. To them, instead of its appearing to be a vast nation greeting royalty, it seemed rather that a select party of congenial people of rank were entering an unsettled land upon a pleasure trip. Cordoba, Orizaba and Puebla had been passed, and they were on a stretch of desert. A congenial sun shone upon them; fresh,

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invigorating breezes fanned their sunburnt faces, as each day they progressed farther and farther west.

It was not until the eleventh day of the journey that anything like a reception to royalty appeared. Then it was that as they approached Mexico the great army that Marshal Bazaine still kept about him at the capital appeared to give a welcome to the new-comers, with the martial airs of France; and triumphal entrance was made into the great city of the Montezumas. Here there was no lack of enthusiasm, or spontaneity, on the part of the residents. True, a large majority were Indians, with all the peculiarities of their race, which the strangers had already noticed on their journey thither. Swarthy countenances, full of vigour, but indicative of indifference and silence—solemnity without intellectuality. So remarkable were the mixed races that the Duchess made no comment, even to her husband. They had contented themselves with conversations upon the scenery, the architecture, the vegetation of the places through which they had passed, touching only upon the dress of the inhabitants.

The members of their suite, however great their disdain of the appearance of the inhabitants, refrained, in the presence of the monarchs,

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from discussing the inferiority of the masses. To Maximilian's mind there had come a great change since landing. He kept it quite within his own breast, but the slothfulness of the inhabitants made his heart quail. Could his grand schemes for innovation be seriously taken up by these people, he asked himself. It was a retrogression which he was now forced to confront and check, rather than a progression to lend a quick-step to. But then, there were the clergy yet to consult. They understood these distressingly poor people. They had assured him of their adaptabilities and necessities.

"We must have railways at once," he remarked to his wife, when the journey into Mexico was finished. "This is one of the world's greatest routes, and the thought that it is so backward in transportation makes me shudder. Why, Cortez hardly took longer to approach within striking distance of Mexico than we. We have much to consider at once."

The coronation took place in America's greatest cathedral, under the auspices of the Archbishop, and in the presence of the martial arms of the French Empire. Bazaine had arranged all that with the clergy, in advance. Prompt action was necessary. Till that ceremony was performed Maximilian had never spoken of himself or his

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consort other than under the title of his birth. From that time onward, he was Emperor and she Empress of Mexico. He never allowed any other title to be used.

A great ball followed the night of the coronation; and the etiquette of the strictest of European courts was at once introduced into the system, which was founded upon a heterogeneous mixture of aboriginal republics. It was a strange blending of ideas, and one which, like most blendings, brought forth hybrid results.

But there was work ahead: an empire was to be made; an empire was to be founded upon a rock.

Maximilian had excellent training, qualifications and ideas for ruling; but they were all such as should have been applied to an organised government. He had also fair powers of organisation. Yet such was his task that it is doubtful if anyone—short of a Cæsar, with a grand army behind him—could have established a monarchical government in Mexico in 1864.

Father Fischer was no longer in evidence. That remarkable man had quietly slipped away from the party at Orizaba, leaving the Emperor entirely free from clerical advisers, or appearance of Church influence. Yet when, with Marshal Bazaine by his side, Maximilian sat down to

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make a draft of the portfolios to be filled, he found it advisable to have one connected with the Church as his Minister of State; another still more closely allied to it as his Minister of Finance; a third, very agreeable, yet eminently a reversionist, Minister of the Property of the State; and, with the exception of the military family, none about him were laymen; and these men of his military household were, with one exception, like himself, foreigners.

The English and Spanish forces had long since been recalled. Maximilian's own forces numbered a scant thousand natives, poorly clad, poorly armed, and scarcely drilled in the primary tactics. More than thirty thousand French soldiers were in and about the capital, and nearly a quarter as many more in garrisons in various parts of the country, chiefly to the north. It is natural that a man trained to the sea should have turned his attention to the construction of a navy upon coming to a throne which looked down upon more than two thousand miles of sea-coast upon two oceans. Yet his chagrin may be imagined, when turning to Bazaine one day, as he was deliberating upon an appointment, he said :

“ M. le Maréchal, what is the efficiency of our navy on both oceans ? ”

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The Marshal was a thick-set little man, of abrupt manner, quite in keeping with his extraction.

"Mon Dieu," he replied sharply, "it is nothing."

The Emperor looked surprised, and said: "Excuse me, I don't quite catch your reply."

The Marshal gave a cruel smile, that the Emperor never forgot, nor half forgave.

"The entire navy of the Empire of your Majesty is one unseaworthy vessel, now on service as coast patrol in the Gulf of Mexico."

Maximilian grew white, and changing the subject he said: "It is certainly fortunate that I have the strong arm of France by my side."

"It is, your Majesty," replied Bazaine. "I have a most efficient army corps in the field. It is fortunate that they are Frenchmen, and that in most instances they have no knowledge of the Mexican language, as there is constant pressure being brought to bear upon them to become naturalised and to take up a land bounty from the State."

"From the State?" exclaimed the Emperor.

"Yes, your Majesty, from the Republic, which seems at times to exist—both *de jure* and *de facto*—under our very noses!"

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"Is it so well organised as that?" asked Maximilian critically.

"No, excepting on the field of battle, the Republican government and the forces of the Mexican Republic are entirely without organisation, means of taxation, methods of State executive, or forms of justice. Nevertheless, it exists; and no sooner is one's back turned, than encroachments upon your Majesty's prerogatives begin to spring up. I have been in the country, with the French army of occupation, now, more than two years, and innumerable engagements have been fought. As your Majesty is aware, I have pressed so hard upon the Republicans and President Juarez that I have cleared the southern and central portions of the territory of their forces. Yet, when we corral their forces, and compel their surrender, we find them largely without arms and wholly without ammunition. A week later, if we withdraw, a completely armed and, from their standpoint, well-equipped army of anything from one up to five thousand men may be at our backs. A revolution, or rebellion, is a thing easily encountered and suppressed; but the spirit of insurrection is an inborn trait of the Mexican and is imperishable. It has more lives than a cat, and I am still at a loss to know how to suppress it."

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"Do you think the people yet prepared for the introduction of railroads and the telegraph?"

"The latter," replied Bazaine, "they would be indifferent to and never use, so that as an investment it could not be valuable. Invaluable that and any railroad would be to any Government controlling them. Think," said the Marshal, with evident pride; "what my soldiers have done—marched north three thousand leagues from the city of Mexico and back, conquering every place assailed, and never once hearing from our base here in Mexico till a quarter of the homeward triumphal march was completed!" He smiled with satisfaction, and bowing deferentially to the Emperor said: "Sire, I have become part Mexican myself. I am an inveterate cigarette smoker. Will you permit me in your presence?"

Maximilian, with his usual affability, replied; "Certainly, monsieur. In fact, I, too, must become a Mexican. Let me join you." He rerolled and lighted a cigarette, and then said: "I have brought out on the *Novara* a corps of field engineers. I am aware, of course, that the route we took from Vera Cruz to Mexico is already surveyed for a road; but it is possible to improve upon it, and I shall have a resurvey made at once. I shall also construct three other roads from this city: one to Oaxaca south, one

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to Guadallahara north, and one to the Pacific Ocean at Acapulco."

The Marshal leaped excitedly to his feet, exclaiming: "The dream of my Emperor will be realised at last. Your Majesty will be in complete control of the territory when that work is finished; and you will have then no further need of an alien army of occupation."

The Emperor seemed pleased at so hearty an endorsement of his plans from such excellent authority. The task was a difficult thing; and when it is realised that the twentieth century sees it still incomplete, the enormous work and enterprise it meant seems appalling. Yet Maximilian's projects were correct. The desirability of such highways under Imperial control may be appreciated when it is stated that in the sixties it took as much time to make the journey from Vera Cruz to the City of Mexico as it now takes, with much more ease, to cross the American continent from New York to San Francisco! That the journey from Mexico to Guadalahara was one of five days more! That to cross the mountains from Mexico to Acapulco it took as long as it now takes to go from Rome to Constantinople, and that from either southern or northern boundary of Mexico to the capital was a journey of a month!

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"I will master land and sea," said Maximilian, after a long pause, during which he had been regarding a blank table top, as if studying a map of the country. "I want time, perhaps I shall have peace; but I will teach these people that I came among them, not with the spirit of conquest, but with the desire of extending to them Christian civilisation."

"Say, rather civilisation, your Majesty," replied Bazaine. "The chief feature of their civilisation up to this time has been Christianity, *Christi et ecclesiae!* It has been all for the Church and little for the people. They have been subjected to the darkest ignorance, and, like a hungry octopus, the Church has fastened its tentacles upon their vitals and exhausted them. No! Let it be known that you are free from the Church, and that you will stand between it and prosperity, and much can be gained."

"I will show them, in any event, that their Emperor has no intention to accumulate property. A prince has no right to be other than a distributor of money. It is a mistake for him to save and struggle for gain with his subjects competition. He is a medium for keeping up a healthful circulation of currency." After a pause: "I wish, M. le Maréchal, you could lunch with her Majesty and myself, as we would take

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pleasure in showing you our plans for our summer palace at Chapultepec."

"Ah," said the Marshal, "a new Hall of the Montezumas. Your Majesty's wish I obey with pleasure." And rising, they proceeded to the royal apartments in the palace, where Charlotta and her suite awaited their coming.

Mexico is a striking city. It is upon a plain. Its altitude is about 8000 feet. Its streets run east and west, and north and south. Stopping at any intersection, one can see, in all four directions, the end of each street, and far away in the distance the azure-cloaked mountain ranges, that vary in height above the city from 5000 to 10,000 feet more. It is always an imposing sight, and ever one that is ready to take the mundane load of humanity off one's shoulders up! up! high upon the round, strong shoulders of Nature. The stars impress us so; but then, when they appear, humanity is out of sight already, and perhaps they take us away from our poor souls, lifting us so, or showing us unanswerable arguments of the power and the system and the beauty and the wonder of God. Not the God that said: "There shall be no other God but me!" Nor the one that said: "For I am the Lord thy God, and a righteous God!" Nor the God that is preached at us from a clattering pulpit, or that is insisted

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upon as being the great and only God to be worshipped in churches and before shrines and tinselled altars, but the God of the thunderstorm and the God of nature, from whom man sprung, and unto whom he not only may some time return, but unto whom man *does* return when he dies, without waiting for the great day of judgment. It is the God who judges men kindly, while yet in life, and then says: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

There are shrines and altars at every turn in the city of Mexico, bidding, as it were, mankind to come and kneel and worship and pray. There are churches of beauty, external and internal—churches of vast costliness—and others, wonderful examples of the builders' strength and originality, conception of space with the combination of suitable proportions, appropriately coloured.

In the city of Mexico there is no fashionable faubourg ; the rich, the poor, the mine-owner, the merchant, the shopkeeper, even the Indian, may live in close proximity. Beside a pulquerie is an ample doorway of a palace, and all outside almost of prison-like aspect. One ventures a few steps within, and one is in a magnificent patio or courtyard, in the centre of which a beautiful stone fountain of elaborate design is reared, with a great stone basin that catches the falling spray in its

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limpid lap. Round about, on all four sides, balconies arise, beautifully arched—one, two, three, one above the other—elaborately carved entablatures presenting a front of captivating design; whilst below, upon the pavement, within the shade of the loggias, are tropical plants and sojas of great height, lovely rare orchids and a great variety of cacti. The place ripples with the noise of falling water, is cheery with the melodious voice of birds, and fragrant with the smell of such flowers as bees ravish after miles of swarming.

Behind, and somewhat screened by the abundant foliage of tree and shrub, are the workshops of the palace. We look about in vain for a stairway; and thinking perhaps the entrance to the storeys above is from the street, one retires as one came, when far back one discovers a great ground-floor hall, where springs a magnificent stone stairway of dimensions ample for the greatest of Court functions. This, too, is elaborately decorated with appropriate carvings and designs, mysteriously lighted from without. Half-way up its ascent is interrupted by a piazza, its direction broken at right angles, then the great steps lead up to the floor above.

Here we are upon the first of the balconies, and look down upon the patio and about us at the aviaries, and listen to the whistle of the mocking-

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bird, and the dull low notes of the gorgeous parrots. Men, birds, foliage and flowers, all seem cheered by the divine sunlight, and to be giving thanks for that touch of salubrity of air and temperature which is Mexico's.

Returning, we pass through the hall to a great reception-room—a hall like the Hall of Ambassadors of the Alhambra. This was Maximilian's first home in Mexico. And you say, this is the first Empire? This ancient palace here! Fit for an emperor in the days of the Roman Empire! One of the many Mexican palaces that were built and dwelt in, and in which history was made, at a time when the Pilgrim Fathers were dwelling in log cabins! This palace was one of Nueva Iberia, not extraordinary among its neighbours, excellent and appropriate in its day to its owner's wealth and position. It was not even that of the Archbishop, nor of the Viceroy of Spain. It was such a house as Mexicans of great resources thought proper to build and inhabit centuries ago.

What could these walls tell of all that had passed before them! A prison without, a palace within—there was need for both then. What spirit of love and hope had sprung to life here! What thoughts of revenge, what contemplation of remorse! Centuries through which right and wrong had struggled in death-like agony, now

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one, now the other, in the ascendant. What of repose the conquest of Cortez left here, the Spanish Viceroy endeavoured to maintain. Then came the Church of Rome, eternal, penetrating, impersonal, grasping, the wily accomplice of the individual to-day, that the glory of the Cross may spring forth again to-morrow.

The Emperor, accompanied by Marshal Bazaine, entered a large room which opened immediately off the first balcony to the south, and which had a row of three great windows opening from the floor admitting the cool southern breezes. The Empress sat near the middle of the room, at a table upon which she was examining some drawn linen work which had recently been sent her. She greeted the Marshal cordially, and turning graciously to her husband said lightly :

"I hope your Majesty has informed M. le Maréchal that we wish to show him our plans for Chapultepec."

"Yes," replied the Emperor. "We have come to luncheon with you purposely to discuss the plans. And while he is here, I also wish personally to show him what I am having done at Cuernavaca—a Trianon at Cuernavaca! What say you to such a scheme as that, my dear Marshal? You know the spot well."

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"Cuernavaca!" exclaimed the Marshal. "Indeed I do! The loveliest spot in the world! I was not aware that your Majesty had been there yet."

"Once, only once," said Maximilian carelessly; "and then just long enough to confirm what you say of its beauty, and to decide upon a retreat. To me, the Trianons of princes are not without significance, for in them one discovers the character of the proprietor. Do you remember, my dear, our visit to Mortui?" he said, addressing his wife.

She looked up smilingly, and said:

"Perfectly, it was upon one of our last journeys in Europe."

"The interior of Mortui," added Maximilian, "was simple, even common, but comfortable and clean; an unpretending private house, full of little souvenirs which artlessly revealed a happy family life. At Cuernavaca I am not to build, but to rebuild or remodel an old house, ample in itself, which is situated in the midst of a lovely water-palace villa, a kind of Generalife, such as stands so superbly above Granada, or rather the Alhambra, in Spain."

At this moment a Mexican servant appeared, and announced luncheon, so that for the moment the conversation was interrupted. When it was

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again started at the table, Marshal Bazaine said :

"The surroundings of Chapultepec, your Majesty, are to me most impressive, being practically the western gate and fortress of the city of Mexico. It is literally hemmed in by the battlefields of every invader and conqueror who has yet visited his blows upon Mexico. The Montezumas battled there before the coming of Cortez, and the American arms there met with one of the fiercest oppositions that has yet ever been chronicled in Mexico. It is difficult for me, a fighter by profession, as I wander about the walls under Chapultepec to fancy the roar of cannon and musketry disturbing the quiet shades amidst that splendid grove of cedars. A place for a student, a scholar, or a poet, rather than a warrior."

"I particularly like the associations of the place," said the Empress, who had listened to the General's description. "It is especially fitting that we should erect our chief residential palace there amidst the stately surroundings. The Emperor says that never in all his travels, not even in the upper waters of the Amazon, has he seen such magnificent trees."

"Yes," said Maximilian, "and so excellent is the soil for the growth of fine timber, that I

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propose at once to lay out the Paseo, from the farthest corner of our Alameda, straight away to the foot of Chapultepec, with a rond-point at the first and second mile, and a third at the base of the hill itself; so that a double row of eucalyptus may be set out on either side, bordering each bank of the canal to the right and the left of the drive. It is my intention to begin this simultaneously with my palace, and to complete both as soon as possible."

"We will show you our drawings after luncheon," said the Empress. "They are very ample, very convenient, and, with the hanging gardens, very charming. I can already see them finished, and fancy you, dear Max, resting there after the great difficulty of organising your Government has been overcome."

The Marshal gave an involuntary shiver, which was not noticed by either, but he made no immediate reply. No one was better aware than he of the great task ahead of the Emperor; and while fully appreciating the wisdom of suitable public works, he, from the standpoint gained by experience, saw very little basis for ease and luxury. It was more of a woman's notion of royal life than a man's. A conscientious, not to say an ambitious, monarch cannot be an idler. Very little time can be

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called his own. He is more or less public property.

Maximilian found it even so—progress in affairs seemed at times to be quite impossible. With ideas of permanency in his mind, it was natural for him to look ahead to the time when, by the Treaty of Miramar, the French army of occupation would be withdrawn, and when it would be necessary to have an army distinctly Mexican. Therefore, his first steps in a military way were directed towards a Mexican army, officered chiefly by foreigners. In this he had the thorough co-operation of Marshal Bazaine, who took pride in assisting and directing in a large manner the maintenance of a native army. Hand in hand with this plan went the collection of revenues. There was the usual means adopted for both internal and external duties. But, upon turning his attention to the public domain, Maximilian found himself alone among his party in his attitude to that portion of it that had, previous to his coming to the country, been taken by the State from the Church.

It was here that the first decided friction came. True, his enthusiasm had received a great shock when he had seen the country, and had for the first time realised the dense

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ignorance and the dire poverty of the mixed races about him ; but even that he had considered surmountable. In time, they could be lifted and helped. It was his intention to free the peons, and settle or colonise them upon lands of the State, with suitable arrangement for a revenue, returnable to the State, graded by years, and to direct his Government to assist them by way of schools and habitations. But he was compelled to abandon these ideas almost simultaneously with the first practical experiments with the revenue laws ; for, instead of receiving assistance from the clerical party, he encountered their direct opposition. All the lands that had been taken from the Church, now that the arms of the Liberal party had been driven back well-nigh to the border of the United States, they desired should be absolutely and immediately returned to it. They still threatened with excommunication anyone taking title to their property, whether by gift from the State, or by purchase, or by inheritance from those who might already have possession. The strongest hold of the Church was upon the lower classes ; and the Emperor, for a time, abandoned his plan of retaining the Church property, although he began his system of schools for the children of the masses, and made the first move in a

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direction towards a universal primary instruction, which was to the end only second in its obnoxiousness to the leaders of his party. Therefore, so far as his attempts to obtain revenues went, he met with opposition from the very persons to whom he looked for the most assistance.

But revenues are not only the sinews of war, but the life of the State; and opposition here and there could not be allowed to dispose of the question altogether. As time went on, and entanglements grew from the cross purposes at which the Church and State found themselves, it became necessary for Napoleon, whose army he had hoped to maintain at the expense of his newly created protégé, to send a special envoy to personally conduct the exchequer of the Mexican Empire. Thus affairs continued—one day devoted to domestic matters, another to public concerns of great moment to the new state, and yet another to quasi-public functions; and throughout all, save in the purely domestic affairs of the ruling family, the hand of the clergy perceptibly insinuated itself in every proposition. Maximilian did not oppose it. Whatever he did, he acted openly and frankly and generously. What opposition the clerical party felt seemed to come upon their heads as a blow squarely delivered from over the

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Emperor's shoulder—it was from the heart of a woman, and of a woman no less desirous of ruling than her husband.

The visitor to the city of Mexico to-day is driven by way of the Paseo to Chapultapec, over the finest urban drive in the Western Hemisphere. In many ways it is unique; in every way dignified, ample and effective, with its magnificent double hedgerow of eucalyptus on either side, and for that grateful shade he thanks silently the ill-fated Emperor who gave it to his capital. It was along the fore-part of this Paseo, which was then, in 1864, in the early stages of its construction, that the Imperial equipage swept rapidly one beautiful Sunday morning, filled with the immediate household of the Emperor. They had just come from the royal chapel, where Mass had been said, and were hurrying to a fashionable restaurant just on the confines of the city. The Emperor had arranged, as he said, a feast whereby they might strengthen themselves for the longed-for spectacle that was awaiting them. They were to witness that afternoon the much talked-of bull-fight, the first since their arrival in Mexico.

Maximilian was in the best of spirits. The hours did not step quick enough for him; impatience and restlessness seized him. All press-

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ing affairs of State had been put aside, and he joined joyously in the excitement which seemed to possess the entire population. The city was *en fête* after the hour of noon had sounded. In order that his party might become acquainted with the tastes and fancies of the Mexican people, the Emperor had ordered for dinner an olla podrida, which he said was one of the most delicious and excellent dishes that had ever tickled a human palate. His experience in Spain had qualified him to pronounce an opinion. It was a mixture of different meats, excellent sausages and herbs, abundance of cabbage and other vegetables, among which—to the horror of his guests—were also onions and garlic, in combination with olive oil.

"I can appreciate," said Maximilian, laughing; "the pleasure of Don Quixote and other Spanish heroes at the hope of finding in some posada this delightful repast."

Everything about the feast was thoroughly Spanish and Mexican, even to the wines; and the host gaily and liberally insisted that all, for once at least, should throw off the fetters of conventionality, and become Mexican on this great day of the people. Impatiently he looked at his watch, as he saw the hands at last approaching the hour appointed for the

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fight. With a glad step he went towards his carriage, which was worthy of an emperor, and proceeded with his Empress to the Arena de las Corridas, a large round building standing in an open space, where a detachment of his recently organised Mexican Royal Lancers were on guard. The entire route was thronged with every description of vehicles, horsemen, gaily caparisoned, and pedestrians, raising clouds of dust mountains high. The great stream of humanity hastened forward with a keenness betokening the enthusiasm provoked by the national fête. Detached troops—some with, others without, arms—marched in as easy form as the crush of carriages and horsemen admitted of. Every phase of society and every caste, so numerous in Mexico, appeared to be represented.

Alighting in a space cleared for a moment by the guard, the Emperor's party went through the galleries to the Imperial box, just above the judges', and stood under the interior galleries, looking out upon the wide, imposing space of the arena. The Emperor, who ordinarily detested crowds, and sought by preference solitude, was for the moment willing to make any sacrifice of comfort for the sake of the spectacle and the acclamation awaiting his arrival.

The arena, which had a close resemblance to

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the Roman form of circus, was one half stone and the upper half wood. Roofs, supported by light arcades, protected the spectators from the glaring sun. In the midst of the stone compartment rose the royal tribune, ornamented with the Imperial crown, and under it a large gate. Opposite was the box of the Impressario de la Corrida, also over a large gate. The interior space of the arena, in which the fight takes place, was elliptical. A tolerably high wooden partition protected the public to a certain extent against the dangers of the fight. In certain parts of this partition were openings, with wooden screens before them, painted with attributes of the corrida; they served the fighters as a refuge.

The great surging crowd from without had now come within, and were hastening to their various seats about the immense amphitheatre—twenty thousand if a man. On all sides, and above and beneath the royal box, was crowded humanity; not all were fortunate in having shelter from that torrid sun, but with sombreros of infinite variety of size and colour the spectators sat as indifferent to the scorching rays as if they had not been. All was noise and excitement; spaces were allotted to battalions of soldiers here and there, who sat

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with their arms aground. Other spaces seemed reserved for the Indian population, whose zerapes flamed forth a warmth of colour, as if defiant of heat and glare.

Looking at this vast throng, and thinking of that which was to come, both Maximilian and Charlotta were seized with an uneasiness, a doubt whether they should be able to look upon the bloody game that was to take place before them. The Emperor seemed as if he were about to leave the arena. An inward feeling urged him from his seat, but the galleries, filling more and more, retained him, the aspect of stirring life overcoming for a moment the uneasy feeling. Hundreds of tints of Sunday dresses blended together in boxes and galleries. Turning and facing the great crowd in the seats just behind him, he beheld a scene that greets the eye nowhere outside the city of Mexico!

Crouched upon their haunches were the representatives of the aboriginal races of Mexico, swarthy of complexion, sullen in aspect, huge, bony Indians, wrapped in their blankets, shadowed by their widely brimmed hats, silent, solemn, fierce and expectant, all gazing at a common centre, an object moving in the ring. A subject for a grand master of the brush,

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grouped to witness the most barbarous of modern sports.

The Imperial party attracted no more attention than empty space. This indifference was not flattering, but it afforded an excellent opportunity for observing racial characteristics, and, further, it plainly indicated the purpose of their gathering. Such a conglomeration of costumes, complexions and anatomy was possible nowhere else. In the arena slender men, with their little hats, their embroidered jackets and red sashes, moved about with an incessant restlessness, making a noise, a cry, a whistle, practising in that manner the chorus for the coming spectacle. Thousands of fans rustled and rattled with a continuous movement. The abanicos of the rich shone in the brightest colours of China; whilst the poor, and the stronger sex, not in the habit of using these instruments, were fanning themselves with newly purchased fans of cane and paper, on which was painted a scene of the Torillos, and a Mexican verse composed for the occasion. Dark little heads moving up and down, with the sparkling eyes and fresh roses under the lace veils that covered their raven hair, the mantilla gracefully wrapped about the shoulders, chattered away on the stone seats. Did not the red lips part in order to tell of

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pleasant memories of the ball? Were the laughing, starry eyes examining the merry ranks of the coming dances? No; Mexico's daughters were only pleasantly excited in expectation of the bloody fight!

Some officers in rich uniforms entered the door behind the royal box, and with them one of the most charming and beautiful apparitions Maximilian had yet seen in Mexico. She took her place to the right of the royal box, where he could examine the play of her features and each of her movements. At this stage she seemed only to be joking with one of her admirers; but he was so much attracted to her that he determined to observe her during the terrible moments of the fight. The noise of the crowd and the rustling of the fans became ever louder and more impatient. Amidst the general hubbub were to be heard the piercing voices of the vendors of refreshments. One would expect that the pretty lips of the daughters of Mexico required something cooling, in ice creams; that the pearly teeth, with which the mouth of every well-born Mexican woman is adorned, would only crack biscuits. But, no. Savage as the Mexicans are in their pleasures, they are equally primitive in the objects which they offer to their palate—only water and imported “Spanish Wine” are handed

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round, and a light kind of pastry sometimes called "windbag."

The large, wide arena was filled. A deep blue sky arched over a wide space and formed a most beautiful ceiling. The picturesque, motley crowd became still more noisy. They knocked against the wooden seats: the people began to exercise the right that had belonged to them for centuries—the right to direct the game, at least partly, by their cries. The spectator felt that the hour had come for beginning the fight. The royal party seemed to have recovered its composure, and to partake of the impatience of the populace with incomprehensible excitement. Now the trumpet sounded.

The door of the large Tribune opposite to them opened. The noise of the crowd became still more general, like the roar of the rushing flood through an aroya. All looks were directed to a man who appeared in the arena on a stout and vigorous Mexican horse. It was the Impressario, who rode in to receive from the authorities who were sitting in the great Tribune the key for the opening of the festivity. He stopped his horse amidst the joyful shouts of the crowd. The Mexicans, who, like all Southern people, yield to any opportunity for excitement, and then give vent to their feelings, have also

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subjected this ceremony of the throwing of the key to applause or censure. Thus, if the Impressario catches it with his hat, then roaring and clapping of hands follow ; if the key falls to the sand, then the people laugh and hiss. The functionary saluted, and then from the balcony went flying a key, richly ornamented with ribbons, which unfortunately fell on the sand. There was hissing and laughter. Then followed a fresh fanfare of trumpets, and the strains of military music, creating an excitement which would have raised any other roof than that broad canopy of heaven above. Then there entered with proud steps the espadoss with their quadrilles, the picadors, the banderilleros, in rich old Spanish costumes, followed by a team of four white mules of fine build, ornamented with little flags and bells, ready to bring away the slaughtered animals.

Maximilian turned to the English minister, who was in his party, and said : "I would like to own those animals."

"They are very fine ones," said the minister glancing critically at them ; "perhaps it can be arranged."

Little did they think how that team would one day pass into a chapter of a great tragedy.

Old Mexico approached, with the ancient costumes of Spain, with her splendid magnificence

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of dress, and with her imposing movements. Confident of their courage and of victory, the combatants entered the great assembly with proud looks. They were greeted exultingly from all parts; the finest eyes sparkling in the gallery shot at them their fiery arrows. It was one of those state processions in which not only money—that petty motive power of modern times—did its best, but where the feeling, the consciousness of their own strength, alone lent dignity to the men in the arena. How rich and how favourable to the exhibition of their fine forms was the dress of the espados and their quadrilles. Tastefully embroidered, beautiful silk spencers encircled the slender body; over the shoulders flowed embroideries of gold and silver, like rich nets of leaves. No tie pressed the free neck; the rich hair, to the advantage of the noble features, was combed back and ended in a little silk tail, ornamented with a rich tuft of black silk netting. On the head was a jaunty velvet cap; the waist was encircled by a broad sash; the breeches, richly ornamented with gold and silver embroidery, were of the same material as the spencer; from the knee downwards the well-formed, supple leg was encased in fine pink or white silk stockings; over their shoulders hung gracefully and in rich folds silk cloaks, with

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richly embroidered collars. In this fashion were the espados, their quadrilles and banderilleros clad. The picadors, or mounted combatants, had the same rich spencers, sashes and mode of dressing the hair, as the other combatants ; but instead of the little velvet cap they had that flat, broad-brimmed, grey hat celebrated in pictures, with the many-coloured bands and ribbons which held the tail horizontally on the head of the horseman. High boots, under the yellow leather trousers, which were discovered by the stiff movements of the men, protected them against the sharp horns of their antagonists. In his right hand, each picador held a pica. He sat on the high Andalusian saddle, his foot resting on the broad Moorish stirrup.

After the combatants had made their proud entrance, accompanied by the roaring applause of the people, they distributed themselves about the arena, and changed their elegant cloaks for others more appropriate for the fight. The beautiful mule team disappeared through a side gate ; the military music ceased, as the Impressario backed gracefully his high-stepping horse to the gate of entrance, never once turning his back to the Tribune. As he withdrew a shrill flourish of trumpets proclaimed the culminating moment. The gates open, the move-

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ment becomes more anxious, the excitement indescribable. The bull—the black son of the herd—which, as he enters, receives upon his neck a barbed rosette of ribbons, rushes forward with powerful leaps, amidst endless cheering and loud enthusiasm. Suddenly, he stands as if spellbound, and looks long and wildly on the thousands and thousands of spectators, proudly surveying the place on which he is to fight and to die. Each member of that vast concourse experiences at that moment one feeling, that *he* is selected by the mountain monster as his prey. A shudder of fear, transitory, but full of force, passes over each spectator. Then the noble forms of the combatants surround him, and, fluttering their cloaks before his eyes, entice him upon his many fruitless chases, each in turn saving his comrades by quickly passing between pursued and pursuer, flaunting the gaudy garment in affront. Irritated, the bull bows his head and rushes upon them, as with a light graceful movement they manage to evade him, with the loss, perhaps, only of a piece of the cloak torn from them by his horns. Again the cloaks are waved before him; and again, threatening with his horns, he rushes after his audacious enemies. One thinks he must reach them in his wild course, that he

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must run his horns into their sides, when with incredible swiftness, and indescribable grace, they leap the barricade of the arena, or are again saved by the alertness of their fellows. The bull is invariably attracted to his last tormentor, and consequently slackens as they renew the attack. Then, too, maddened by the brilliancy of the colours, he gluts his wrath rather upon the gaudy cloaks than on the flesh of man. It is now the object of the art of the combatants to irritate the furious bull in such a manner as to make him run towards the picadors, who are waiting for him on horseback. For a moment he pauses before the horsemen, then with all his might he rushes against them. One expects the most dreadful things to happen, but a well-directed thrust in his back from the lance makes him rebound at once from all three picadors. The bull is wounded; blood, warm blood, has flowed; the approaching fight changes anxiety into a singular pleasure. The frantic acclamations of the people accompany the combatants, and at each movement of the bull, one looks at Mexico's handsome daughters who are near by. Their features are perfectly calm, nor do they shudder on seeing the gaping wounds. Again the combatants, so beautiful in their movements, wave their cloaks

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as they hover round the bull, which is now beginning to be furious and to pursue them as if he were mad. If the game becomes too dangerous, they throw their cloaks at his feet, which he attacks furiously, thus affording them time to escape; or another combatant with his cloak allures his pursuer in another direction. Once more the picadors await the charge of the bull. They thrust their lances towards him, but this time, instead of flying, the bull rushes with his sharp horns against the flanks of a horse, which receives a mortal wound. Both horse and rider are raised high in the air and fall backward to the ground.

One gallant steed is stretched a mangled corse;
Another—hideous sight!—unseam'd appears,
His gory chest unveils life's panting source,
Though death-struck, still his feeble frame he rears,
Staggering, but stemming all, his lord unharmed he bears.

The interest grows keener and keener as the fight gets more exciting. Whilst the picador remounts his bleeding horse, the bull in a magnificent rage plunges his horns into the steed of another picador. As long as the horses can keep on their feet the picadors mount them. Their very entrails protrude, and they drag themselves along half dead! One wishes the rider instead were the tortured

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one. The more blood and entrails that flow, the greater the delirium of the crowd, so delightful are its horrors to them. The bull makes a fresh attack, throwing the horse, which succumbs to its antagonist, amidst the furious acclamations of the crowd. And now a fresh flourish of trumpets announces the arrival of the banderilleros. These are skilful men, who plant between the shoulders of the bull two long javelins ornamented with coloured paper. On their appearance the picadors retire with matchless ease and dexterity, the banderilleros run their weapons into the flesh of the bull, which makes straight for them. A light and graceful movement saves the man from the bull, yet the animal is enraged at the javelins which, striking and sticking into him on both sides of his fore-back, flutter about his head the more he stamps and shakes himself to be free of them. After having been wounded by six of these, he is quite furious with agony, and the roars and the showing of the tongue indicate the character of the torment. The trumpet sounds anew, and Luco Blancho, the richly dressed, handsome matador, steps forward, amidst a tumult of acclamations from the throng, and approaching the Tribune greets the authorities, and asks if he may give the bull the *coup de grâce*. The celebrated red cloth flutters on his

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arm, a pointed sword is in his hand. Looking round the assembly, he waves his hat three times horizontally, as a signal of the death, after which, with a firm and grand step, he walks up to the enemy. The quadrilles irritate the bull with the waving of cloaks. Luco Blancho flutters before him his scarlet cloth. The bull rushes against it with a rage. Blancho evades him with agility; several times his play is repeated, and excitement heightened by it.

Foiled, bleeding, breathless, furious to the last,
Full in the centre, stands the bull at bay.

Suddenly the bull takes a direction favourable to the matador, then stops a few paces before him, throwing up clouds of dust with his forefeet, lowers his head and rushes with full force against the red cloth. The great moment has come; and, moved as if by magic, the people rise, without a shudder, without fear of danger, to observe with the eyes of connoisseurs the mortal stab. It is one of the most remarkable of sights, and proves how completely the spectacle has entered into the hearts and souls of the people. Luco stands proud and fearless, as if spell-bound. Suddenly raising the blade, he thrusts it unerringly, sure and up to the hilt, into the back of the animal.

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Where his vast neck just mingles with the spine,
Sheathed in his form, the deadly weapon lies,
He stops—he starts—disdaining to decline ;
Slowly he falls, amidst triumphant cries,
Without a groan, without a struggle, dies.

The air vibrates with acclamations. A wild intoxication seized upon Maximilian. He felt himself borne along, and became eager for the bloody scene. As a conqueror, the matador steps along the line before the Tribune, responding with bows to the thousands upon thousands of looks that are fixed upon him with absorbing interest. He, and not Maximilian, is for the moment the first man in Mexico. As a sign of approval, hats are thrown to him from different parts; with grace he flings them back into the auditorium and galleries. At that moment the matador is the best-acclaimed man of modern times. How speedily the feelings of a man are changed! On entering the Corrida Maximilian had felt uneasy and very uncomfortable, and now a mania for the bloody spectacle possessed him. The bull and the dead horses were dragged away by the white mules, which the Emperor took occasion again to command. The spectators generally had received the same sensations that Maximilian had experienced. Such is the

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effect of the sport. The spectator's original nature is changed, and in it is awakened wild passions, gaining mastery; and he is annoyed when the bull does not succeed in his deathly thrust, when the phases of the fight are not steeped deep enough in blood. The Mexicans are wild and relentless. At such moments as these one becomes aware of the sort of fire smouldering in Mexico.

Now the brave espado addresses the Emperor with dignity, in a congratulatory manner, and announces that the *coup de grâce* will be given to the second bull in his honour.

A strange feeling came over him as all eyes were bent in his direction and a murmur ran through the multitude. Maximilian could not deny that he felt flattered by this national homage. For a moment he fancied himself back in the fine old times of ancient Spain, when the Hapsburgs were the rulers of that noble people. Once more the matador is victorious. The band struck up the *Tango Americano* as the Emperor tossed a purse to the victor, who saluted the chief of the Empire.

The Emperor thought of his native land, his house and of his family, perhaps at that moment sitting round the hissing teapots in the warm salon, with sandwiches and tarts. What lot

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awaited him in their estimation? That delightful circle, preferring little excursions at home to adventurous voyages, breaking out into idyllic ecstasies about the note of a nightingale in the grove close by, or the chirping of a cricket, would exclaim in horror: "Has that poor youth left us to become a barbarian in far countries?" Then, as the din died out, he remarked to the English minister, who was still by his side:

"I love such festivals, in which the original nature of man comes out in its truth."

"An assassination," replied the Englishman coldly, "would do the same."

"True," said Maximilian. "Doubtless the gladiatorial contests of Rome produced much the same effect upon the people as this does. We call ourselves sportsmen, while we send from a secure distance a killing bullet into a half-tamed boar, with the most highly perfected weapon known to man. Only war, which philanthropy cannot abolish, and two sports are there that have not yet degenerated. The first sport is the fox-hunt in your country, in which man is exposed to danger worthy of himself, nor recoils before any obstacle; and if it be said it is useless to risk one's life for useless purposes, I may answer I believe that those who shun

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unnecessary dangers will find courage to meet inevitable ones."

"What is your second sport?" said the minister somewhat less critically.

"The second sport," said Maximilian unhesitatingly, "is the bull-fight in Spanish countries. It is performed here to-day precisely as it is, and has been, performed in Spain for centuries. Your English poet, Lord Byron, has written its most graphic description, with all the fire and purpose and satire of his soul. It is a true popular festival of the olden time. Admittedly, they excite the passions, the inherent savageness of man; but, so also they do his strength, and whosoever takes an enthusiastic part in those scenes will not lack interest for other things, and at least will not perish through apathy."

The Englishman pondered a moment before replying. It was evident that he did not agree. "There are," he said, "undeniably certain fine features of sport in this contest. And all the features might be made sportsmanlike. The bull is both brutal and stupid in the extreme. He is fair game; but a more brutalising sport than this, so far as horses are concerned, cannot be imagined. Man's best friend in the dumb kingdom! Think what torment to those poor

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creatures—wholly unnecessary! Ridden by men of skill and daring, trained with the agility of polo ponies such as I have seen in India, it would be quite possible for the picador to ride priceless steeds into the arena, and to tease the bull fully as much as he does on the jaded beast."

"Yes, I see," said Maximilian, responding cordially; "and by so doing horsemanship would become a feature that would receive the plaudits of the multitude."

"The brutes want blood!" answered the minister. "They delight in it; they are proverbially brutal and cruel to their beasts of burden here, as in Spain, and kind to their dogs."

The conversation was interrupted by the appearance in the box of two of the officers whom the Emperor had noticed early in the afternoon in the company of the beautiful woman whom he had intended to watch during the horrors of the contest. They greeted him and the Empress with distinguished manner, and were soon engaged in conversation with the party. When the Emperor saw his opportunity he asked the elder of the two who their fair companion was, and, as the Imperial box had lost some of the original party, bade him invite

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her to it for the remainder of the contests. She was even more beautiful in close proximity than before, and the Emperor was much pleased to stand beside her and watch the continuation of the fight.

The lady was Señorita Escabar, the daughter of the eldest officer of the group, and a granddaughter of the wealthiest mine-owner of Guauyunta. She was not a resident of the capital, but, like many others in the city at the time, had come upon a visit to be present during the fête. Her beauty was of singular delicacy, Spanish rather than Mexican, and her appearance, while thoroughly national, had a refinement surpassing, rather, that of her countrywomen. Her interest in the contest was very keen; yet she was not so much engrossed by it as to be indifferent to the very direct attention the Emperor honoured her with; and his pleasure in her society was agreeably shared by the Empress, who made a special point of bringing her into conversation with the ladies of her household.

"I am very desirous," said her Majesty graciously, "that you and your father should come to us very informally this week for luncheon. Come Tuesday if you can, and we will show you what we are doing at Chapultepec."

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"My father and I will be most pleased to receive the honour," replied the young woman, smiling sweetly. "We have heard so much said of your Majesty's plans for rehabilitating the old palaces of the Montezumas that we already feel partly acquainted with the design."

"Then, too," chimed in the Emperor, "I will show you my designs for the Trianon at Cuernavaca. I don't suppose your life in the north admits of much acquaintance with places south of the capital."

"Quite the contrary, your Majesty," interrupted the young woman laughingly: "Cuernavaca is my winter home. I go there regularly with my grandfather each year. I was at the convent there as a girl, and am so fond of its charming quiet, its salubrious climate, and the scenery, that I should consider it a great deprivation to be denied the privilege of each winter there."

"Delightful! Delightful!" exclaimed the Emperor. "You shall then assist me in my simple designs. My little refuge is to be one of complete simplicity, but ample and sweet, with abundance of arrangements for my chef to disport himself with the great variety of Mexican dishes which are possible to be obtained at all seasons of the year there; and with that shall vanish all

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affairs of State, and only persons of simple tastes shall be our guests. It is there we are to play as shepherd and shepherdess, and be once again private persons, without rank. Will not that be suitable to your favourite resort?" he asked somewhat quizzically.

"Indeed it will," exclaimed Señorita Escabar, clapping her hands and smiling with much approbation. "I too, when there, like to go back to my very youthful days, and throw off the conventionalities of even our smaller capital at Guauyuinta."

Once more the attention of all centred upon the death of the bull, the sixth killed that day, and in the excitement of the furore all other thoughts were dismissed. The crowd burst forth again into tempestuous excitement, and as the monarch fell to the earth, the vast throng rushed from its seats, over benches and railings, into the arena, and upon the matador. Acclaiming him conqueror and hero, they raised him upon their shoulders, and bore him triumphantly about under the galleries, amidst the peal of martial music and continuous uproar.

Without waiting further demonstration, Maximilian gave the signal for his party to start, and by private corridors they made their way to their carriages, and were soon as drops in that great

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surging human current wending its way back to the city. They did not then follow the custom of their adopted countrymen of driving after nightfall, but went directly to their palace, where the Emperor's well-established love of the pleasures of the table was soon to be gratified.

On the way the Empress said to her husband that she had had in her mind for some time the idea of inviting some desirable Mexican women to become attached to their household.

"Señorita Escabar seems especially fitted for a representative of the people, dear Max," she said sweetly; "a lovely girl, with naturally easy manners and spirits of uncommon joyousness. If we can overcome the prejudices of her race we shall be fortunate in such an acquisition."

"I think," replied Maximilian unhesitatingly; "your usual good sense of discernment of character has not misled you; and I doubt not that we can arrange to have her one of our family when her father comes to us on Tuesday. The General can do me a favour also," he said gaily; "not at all apropos of your demands, my Empress; but he is a patron of the bull ring, and a great breeder of horses and mules. I am going to ask him to have a look at those four fine white mules that we saw this afternoon, and

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if they pass his inspection I shall buy them for my private team."

The Empress laughed, saying : " How strange it would seem to drive behind four white mules in a royal equipage into Vienna."

" Very," said Maximilian ; " but here we adopt the customs of our great ancestors of Spain, and hope even by such emulation to progress as they progressed in peaceful conquest and civilisation." A shade of anxiety fell upon his face as he spoke, the first shadow that had crossed it for the day. " There is much to do to reach even the foot-hills of the mountainous heights of state," he said thoughtfully. " We have been upon a holiday. We return to-morrow, perhaps for ever, to the currents of a struggling humanity, whose ambitions and aims are imperceptible, and whose desires and savageness are a constant source of dilemma. I am an ardent Catholic, Charlotta," he said, pressing her hand lightly in his ; " the presence and omnipotence of my Maker is ever vivid in my mind ; and yet to-day, in the midst of the debauchery of the combats, I could not but ask Him the why and the wherefore of this strange race of people. To what have I brought you, my sweetheart ? " he said, impulsively bending towards her. " The very arm of assistance that I counted on, prior to our

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coming, I find bent at every cross-road against my reaching these people. I am not a soldier of fortune, adventuring here for climaxes of fame and temporary glory. I wish to see the legions of France withdrawn before the inroads of the material prosperity of the masses. Yet I am satisfied, even thus early, that the entire clerical party who are not with us have other aims, and I fear ignominious ones."

"Why should a Church already vastly rich wish further accumulations?" asked the Empress pathetically.

"I can't reply," he sighed. "I think you know, as well as I, it cannot be the will of God. Yet they are His vicars."

"They shall be made to yield, if necessary," broke out the Empress emphatically. "We do not hold our position by grace of the Church. We are the representatives of the masses, and a way must be found to reach their interests at all hazards!" She spoke sternly, almost fiercely, clutching her husband's arm. "Do you suspect any undercurrent of intrigue, my husband?" she said more quietly.

"None," answered he thoughtfully. "In fact, the opposition I meet with is in many ways too obvious, too well organised, too assured. I would almost welcome intrigue, that there

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might be that to seize upon, to root out, to oppose."

They were at their portal. The clatter of the horses' feet upon the stone paving of the patio interrupted further discussion, and at once they were surrounded by their retainers.

VII

THUS the first phase of the reign of Maximilian, the ruler of a mixed and ancient people, passed with its varying flood and ebb tides of hope and fear, seriousness and frivolity, success and failure.

The Empress, from the first, directed her chief attention to the social functions of state, the Emperor his to a coherent and comprehensive Imperial organisation, political and military. Each had tasks of unusual perplexity; neither could begin *de novo*. Both had to engraft upon moss-grown trunks and branches the ideas of established monarchies of the Old World; sometimes the pruning and grafting of each followed a similar course; occasionally they found themselves at cross purposes; and at such times the aid of one minister or another, and sometimes the assistance of Marshal Bazaine, was sought and always readily given. As Maximilian's task grew more complex, Charlotta's grew more defined and easy; and, as it did so, her grasp upon the political situation became firmer. It was especially true of the society of the city of Mexico at this time, as it had

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been frequently before, that its composition was mixed in the extreme. Adventurers from many European countries, and from the United States, occupied positions of importance, which they never hesitated to turn to their social and commercial advantage. Schemers for concessions from the Government, of every description and degree, were constantly in search of advantages which a temporary social position would enhance. Mexicans of adventurous spirit also were to the fore, as well as many of Spanish descent, who were accustomed to spend their winters in the capital. It was noticeable, however, from the first, that Mexicans of lineage and wealth, while continuing their homes there and mixing, as far as is their wont, in general society, neither sought nor accepted favours from the Crown. They maintained a dignified cordiality, without an *entente cordiale*. So long had they been accustomed to changes of government that even the presence of 40,000 alien troops back of the throne was insufficient to convince them that henceforth they were to live—and die—under a monarchy. With a polite indifference they kept aloof—while a sullen indifference kept the masses inert.

Trade of a retail nature, ever an index of local prosperity, felt the contact of a sprightly world

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of fashion now, for the first time in the history of the country, in evidence in the capital. A sparkle of life in the evenings on the Rue San Francisco at the shopping hour, that Corso of the New World, gave a certain air of progress—dawning at last with the advent of royalty. The style of living of the heads of the army of occupation and of the new-comers among the great contractors for public works heightened the so-called social life to a point heretofore unthought of. The effect upon the citizens of the place, whose chief sources of income were of an urban nature, was most striking. Thus the Emperor, ever sensitive to apparent public opinion as to his work, took encouragement from the smoothness of the shallow waters. He with his Empress and Bazaine were together one evening after the guests had departed. The weather was beautiful, with a promise of a flood of perfect moonlight later.

"Let us," said Maximilian, "drive together to Chapultepec in the true Mexican fashion, now that the sun is set." He was in one of his lighter moods, which seemed to come upon him with especial ease when State affairs were at their worst. This capacity for throwing off care was inherited from his sailor days, or perhaps came from the early rearing of a man

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trained to a life of gentle ease and sociability. In any event it was one of the most pleasing traits in his character; the good comradeship which he evinced was always welcomed by his associates. The tall, finely set-up figure, gracefully erect, the frank, handsome countenance, full of intelligence, indicative of no uncomfortable passions or weaknesses, was to those about him as exhilarating as the bouquet of a rare wine.

"Shall we go by the new Paseo?" responded the Empress willingly. "I haven't seen it yet in its completion."

"Yes," broke in the Marshal; "let us have the barriers down, and open it informally to-night."

"Agreed," said Maximilian, rising to give his orders for the drive. "We will go full of fancies that the eucalyptus is already in full growth and grandeur; that the tea-tables await us in our hanging garden in the palace of Chapultepec. Perhaps we shall see by the aid of the full moon that incomparable mountain of Popocatepetl, watching over the form of the sleeping white lady by his side; and then we will mount our steeds and gallop away in the cool of the night to the far-off villa of Cuenavaca, leagues away over the mountains."

"How your fancy leads you on, dear Max!"

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said his wife, laughing at his expressions of youthful exuberance. "What fortunate occurrence has put you in such a mood this fine afternoon? Have the Republicans passed over the border?"

"You must ask our dear friend the Marshal," he replied, "for such information. I have no other cause for joy than the assurances, positive and near at hand, that the morrow and the morrow and the morrow promise work! work! work!"

The drive to Chapultepec from the Alameda is straight away three miles to the south-west of the city. Already sufficient of it was finished to make it the pleasantest drive from the streets of the city, the central thoroughfares of which were always busy at this declining hour of the day. A military band was giving a public concert; hundreds of vehicles were in long lines, driving to and from the Alameda, and many of the occupants had left them, and were walking leisurely about, or standing chatting with those of their friends who were occupying the benches in the park. An air of European indolence prevailed, and round about it all, on the outskirts, were throngs of wandering Mexicans and Indians, in their lurid national attire, busily engaged in a hub-bub of conversation, with the ever-present

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clouds of cigarette smoke about them. It would have been difficult to have given the palm impartially to either bandmaster or aborigines that night, such was the entertainment furnished by each.

The royal party were soon beyond this tumult, and now in single and then in double line the carriages rolled along the Paseo itself. Here, too, the masses had gathered from far and near after the heat of the day had spent itself, and were in multitudes along the sidewalks, or gathered in great wondering groups about the stone benches which were placed at intervals along the drives. The custom of driving after dark argues strongly for the absence of vanity from the composition of the Mexican people. To creep slowly along after nightfall, even in an open equipage, is a singular general custom; but to do so in line, hundreds in extent, in a close carriage at any season of the year is unique above all other idiosyncrasies of luxury. Such, nevertheless, is the custom there, and so enjoyable does it appear that it is never omitted as the night shades fall.

Beyond even this procession did they pass at last, and advancing still farther up the Paseo to the second rond-point an outrider spurred ahead of the carriage and ordered the barricade to the

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last portion of the driveway to be removed far enough to admit the passing of the landau.

"Now we are upon new ground," shouted the Emperor. "It is entirely finished, and we are merely awaiting the circle at the end under the palace to be completed before throwing it open to the public. Fancy, now, my dear Marshal, the beauty of this drive when these eucalyptus-trees receive an inspiration from the great cedars beyond. Fancy them reaching the height of more than a hundred feet, and casting their shadows in the moonlight across the canals and fields."

"It will redound to the great credit of your Majesty's reign," said the Marshal, raising his hat to the Empress. "May we all live to see them casting softening shadows that will cheer the heart with gratitude, and may we receive from these little trees inspirations for the growth of empire, purifying and beautifying all who come beneath their spreading influence."

The Emperor was touched. "Charmingly said," he murmured. "Upon your strong arm we shall lean, and with God's help we shall rule and purify, even as these great gifts of nature He has sent us." And then, in his lighter mood again, he said: "Is not Chapultepec grand to-night, standing there like a fortified island

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rising from the sea? One can almost imagine, with the pale moonlight upon the white scorched plains about it, that it is an island of the sea, with a noble fringe of rock and cedars upon its circular shore. Hark! can we hear the paddles of the canoes of Montezuma approaching along yonder canal? Can it be that his chiefs are returning from their conquest of the western shores of his empire? Perhaps they have in their boats some stray token that has come from the Orient, telling of a kindred people where the great sun sets. Have you ever noticed, my dear, the hieroglyphics which appear on the smooth faces of these stones?" he said, pointing in the clear moonlight to a spot high up the side of the hill. "No, you can't see them to-night. It not only requires the light of day to decipher them, but also the light of antiquity to understand them."

"And what do they say?" asked the Empress.

"That the Montezumas shall come back and rule Mexico," he answered. "That whilst grass grows and water runs these great cedars shall stand sentinels here, granting repose and ease and silence to all comers—citizens and denizens alike; but that the real conquest of Mexico shall be established by a Montezuma!" He turned cheerily to Bazaine, who walked at his side, and

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said abruptly : " M. le Maréchal, have you ever studied General Scott's manœuvres of the battle of Chapultepec ? "

" Yes," said the Marshal, " I have several times been over the exact ground with my aides-de-camp. The hill is a natural fortress ; the diverging canals, so far as I have been able to study ancient maps, are precisely as they were not only in Scott's time, but in that of Cortez ; and under certain conditions of the waters of the lakes the canals and fields adjoining are quite impassable to infantry, to say nothing of horse and artillery. So that by holding Chapultepec one has the key to the situation. It is a little singular to reflect," continued the Marshal musingly ; " that in this battle, and others round about the city walls and gates, the great generals of the opposing sides in the United States were fighting side by side, learning the arts of war. Both General Lee and General Grant distinguished themselves upon the very ground where we now stand."

" Ah," said Maximilian, who had drawn himself up before the Marshal, in close attention, " Lee I have heard of, but not General Grant. Is he then in the Union army ? "

Bazaine passed a mental comment upon the fickleness of fame, and by so doing lost

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the opportunity of replying, for the Empress exclaimed :

"I will have no discussion of modern warfare this night. You are my conductors, and I will go to the *noche triste* tree, and the place by the stream where Alvarado made use of his lance for a bridge. Come," she said, reaching out her hand; "this is my evening. I have been made serious enough by hearing of the return of the Montezumas. I will go and sit where Cortez sat and wept."

"You shall, my dear," said Maximilian, readily falling in with her mood. "I too shall claim part of this evening, and there unfold to you my plans, for such I seem ever to be making, in spite of the sluggishness of the stream of empire."

Again taking their seats in the carriage, they drove slowly out under the shadows of Chapultepec, and then, bearing off in the direction of Guadalupe, alighted for a second time under the shadow of the *noche triste* tree, where Cortez more than four centuries before sat, with bitter tears rolling down his cheeks in the agony caused by the disaster to his arms.

"Did you ever weep?" inquired Maximilian of his Marshal in quiet, respectful tones. It was an odd question perhaps to ask a man of war, the commander of a legion of France, a hard-

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working general risen from the ranks, but it was not unnaturally suggested by the traditions of the spot where they now sat. The intrepid leader of the first Spanish forces on the American continent had relaxed into grief here. The brilliant light of the moon was insufficient to show to his companions any trace of the feelings that may have come upon the Marshal's features as he sat there at the Emperor's feet, facing the Empress, with his back slightly turned to the former. They had disposed themselves as easily as three friends might under the circumstances. After a moment's pause Bazaine said :

" I hope so, your Majesty. Weeping is to the soul what nausea is to the body—a fortunate outpouring, a relief which is a safety valve. I would not say that he who has never wept has never felt keenly, any more than I would say that he who has never vomited has never been pallid with sudden sickness ; but unquenchable grief is deluged in tears just in time to save the soul from exhaustion. It is not unmanly for one of military life to weep. It may at times, in the seclusion of his closet, be the prelude to future inspiration. Weeping is the salvation of women. For the woman who has never wept there is but one agonising escape—madness, sure, relentless and violent. When the spirit, highly wrought

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by soul-stirring crises, cannot escape on the ebb-tide of tears," he continued, with impressive calmness, "it takes flight from the temple of reason, never to return."

The little man had spoken with a far-away air, as if contemplating something moving on the horizon. Maximilian changed his position slightly. The silence was broken soon by Charlotta saying calmly: "I never have shed a tear since my majority. Tears spring from emotion, which may be joy or sorrow, anger or delicious passion, but they indicate an opening of the flood-gates of the mind. The intellect governs emotions, as God governs the forces of nature; if that intellect remains serene, however high the tension may be wrought, tears will not flow, and the object of the mind will be accomplished the more readily."

The Marshal had arisen during the somewhat lengthy speech of the Empress, and without uttering a word took her hand and raised it gently to his lips.

Maximilian, whose custom was to maintain exceptional reserve regarding personal feelings, his own as well as those of others, took occasion as usual to change the topic of conversation, gently but completely.

"I have spoken to no one, as yet, of my intention to travel to my principal provinces and

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capitals, my dear Marshal. I have," he said, in his usual straightforward manner, as if the previous subjects of the evening had led up to the subject, "intended for several months to do this, as soon as our organisation was sufficiently in operation to allow of such departure on the one hand, and your military successes in the north rendered it prudent for you to take time to accompany me, at least over a portion of my route; that portion could be governed by your wish, which, I fancy, would be to visit those cities where your work has been in progress, and where the construction of fortifications has been under your direction."

"An excellent idea," responded the Marshal, with alacrity. "Nothing could give me greater satisfaction, nor could a better time be chosen for such a journey. May I ask your Majesty if the necessity of regency during your absence has been considered?"

"Yes, a regency is necessary in a country like this, so absolutely devoid of means of rapid communication. When I am a day's journey from the capital I am as remote from the affairs of my Government as if I were on an outward-bound ocean steamer on the Pacific. It is that of which I wished chiefly to speak to-night. My departure will take place next month; it is never well, in so peculiar a country as this, to do anything

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suddenly, and arrangements should be made well in advance. I value your advice, my dear Marshal, beyond that of anyone here among the foreigners. Your experience with the people, now of over three years' duration, is such that you are the most competent adviser I have. It is my purpose to make the Empress regent, and to give to her plenary powers during my absence."

Charlotta had given close attention to the brief conversation. It touched on matters quite new to her, upon which, nevertheless, she was prepared to act. Her quick nature went forth to meet the tasks, the difficulties of which she fully comprehended, and had the light of day been present a sinister look might have been noticed stealing across her placid but highly intellectual face. Whatever her thoughts were, she kept them to herself, and listened attentively to the arrangement for the Pronunciamento to the people, and the itinerary that Bazaine suggested should be followed. These details were gone over with such care that it was well into the evening before the party arose and left the *noche triste* tree. Charlotta once turned back and looked upon its great trunk. Then, as she stepped between her husband and the Marshal, she said: "I fail to take any inspiration from the sufferings of Cortez."

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"You must indeed take pride in the thought," said the Emperor, with feeling, "that he was the envoy of Charles V., our great ancestor, and received his commission from that monarch's hand. In carrying out the will of God here we are still emissaries of the ancient Spanish house. That thought, many a time, has been to me in the past year a cheering pillar of strength. Upon assuming your new responsibilites, my Empress, let us hope that you will be similarly sustained."

VIII

IT was about the hour of six in the evening of a day early in March 1867 that a horseman, dressed in the costume of a Mexican traveller of good estate, wended his way through the environs of Cuernavaca, slowly surmounting the road that crossed the river just below the town. Suddenly he entered the quaint square that is faced by the palace of Cortez and the market-place. As he reached the summit of the somewhat steep ascent he drew rein, and turning in his saddle glanced backward over the mesa, which he had just passed. At that moment two other horsemen, with slung carbines, who were only then at the river crossing, also drew rein and remained on either side of the road, without looking to the right or left. The man at the summit now faced his somewhat tired horse about and, removing his immense sombrero, sat calmly watching the wonderful panorama that Nature was unrolling before him.

The dust-covered trappings added somewhat to the melancholy yet elegant appearance of the man. He was tall and lithe and young, with fine, soft, flaxen hair and side whiskers, of

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unusually gentle look and earnest mien. All the indications of a long and wearisome journey were upon him ; but his nature forbade his turning his back upon one of the most marvellous of Nature's beautiful landscapes. More than twenty miles due east of Cuernavaca, Popocatepetl, in close proximity to its sleeping white lady companion, raises its head to the lofty height of 17,000 feet. Yet so close is the condition of the atmosphere at this season that from sunrise to sunset these grand mountains are invisible to the most penetrating eye. It is only at this interval of sunset, when the slanting rays of the declining orb reach forth almost horizontally, that the top of the most perfect of snow-clad cones comes forth, like a spectre, from aloft ; and then dimly the long, low-reaching, perfect-sloping sides appear to the observer in marvellous distinctness. So absorbed is the observer in this beautiful transformation that his attention is unarrested by the foot-hills and gently sloping mesa which begin almost at his very feet. Now, when the great heights, with their thousand years of snow, have entered into his plane of vision, his eyes rest on two wonderfully perfect royal palms, well out on the plain, so placed as to form a most delightful composition against the background of the verdure of the surrounding fields. The charm

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is almost too intense to linger upon for long, and the wanderer turns to proceed on his journey, now well-nigh ended. But yet again, as if to satisfy his thirst for the beautiful to the full, he looks fondly back upon it all. But lo! the sun has dropped below the western hills; once more, as suddenly as it had emerged into distinctness, the mountain has assumed its spectral appearance again, and gradually, very gradually fades—fades—fades away into the misty azure of the night.

Maximilian now bethought himself of his journey's end, and moving along more quickly than his horse appeared inclined to go, soon reached the gate of Acapancingo, the simple Trianon of his own creation. As we have seen, he was not alone. He had made the journey in a day from his capital to Cuernavaca, attended by two mounted guards, whose orders had been to ride well behind him all the way.

Entering the *hacienda*, Maximilian's ear was greeted by the grateful sound of rushing waters, which appeared to spring from every side, amidst a dense growth of tropical plants and trees. Among the greenery gleamed marble balustrades, through the railing of which rushed a crystal rivulet and fell on either side of the stairways. It was a *hacienda* of waters boiling through the

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patio, under arches of palms and colonnades of royal palms, arabesques of cleverly confined and trained myrtle, laurel, cedars and cypress, all woven together into complete harmony with useful productive plants and trees, with which Mexico so abounds in the *tierras calientes*.

The Emperor had passed into the house from the first patio, and within a few moments of his entrance reappeared at the farther and more western side of the house, upon a firmly cemented platform, bordering a pool of crystal water of great depth, into which at a short distance from the wall a small cataract rushed with great confusion. Pausing a moment on its brink, Maximilian could not refrain from glancing towards the western belt of mountains, the soft slopes of which were still visible in the lingering twilight; then taking one step forward he plunged into the placid pool and swam in the refreshing waters to the farther end. Then he struggled easily up the stone staircase and found himself again upon a broad cemented platform, from which another and broader stairway led under an arbour of green leaves down to a landing some dozen steps below. At this point a perfect torrent of crystal waters broke forth from beneath the stairway, rushing in rivulets on either side and through the railing of the

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balustrades, and then emptying themselves with ceaseless tumult into a second and larger basin. Here again Maximilian plunged head foremost into the turbulent waters amidst the inrushing streams, and shaking his head as he came to the surface he struck boldly forth for a dash of a hundred yards.

The shades of night grew deeper, and darkness, somewhat intensified by the arabesques and the tall trees rising up on the brink of the stone sides of the pool, made it necessary for him to hasten. Instead of turning back at the end of the long pool, he went to the right, and amidst equally beautiful arbours and neighbouring stone fountains of unique designs the Emperor approached a third, and yet a fourth pool, each of ample proportions and at various levels. It was indeed a *hacienda* of waters, and as he emerged from the fourth he was but a few rods from the spot where he had entered the first. Here an attendant awaited him with a white bath robe, and he re-entered the house just as darkness fell upon the land.

Within all was simplicity itself, except for the great size of the kitchen, designed to provide those pleasures of the table which the Emperor never forwent when it was possible to obtain them. Nor was it to a solitary feast that he sat

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down that evening. Every compartment of the house was already occupied by favourites and friends ; the desperate affairs of State were to be forgotten, at least for a time, and a few kindred spirits were to enjoy the pleasures and the charming environments of the rural home. Among the guests was Señorita Escabar, whom the reader may recall as having made an appearance upon the occasion of Maximilian's first visit to the bull ring in Mexico. No less beautiful than before, but now a favourite of the Court, she was fast rising into a position of great personal influence with the Emperor, an influence which she invariably wielded on the side of the people as distinguished from the clergy. Then there were two members at the Iturbide family, one the granddaughter of the former Emperor of that name, and the other the child of her brother, whom Maximilian and Charlotta had publicly proclaimed their heir and successor in the absence of any direct issue.

The other members of the house party consisted of the Emperor's personal friends, some of whom were Europeans and some Mexicans. The gathering was wholly informal, met together for no other object than that of recreation ; and surely no more charming spot in Mexico could have been selected, none richer in historical

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interest, none favoured with a more salubrious and fragrant air. It was a brief happiness, but it *was* happiness, the first without alloy that Maximilian had known on the Western continent.

The day following the Emperor's arrival at Acapancingo was spent quietly by the guests, who wandered about the lovely gardens and delighted in the delicious scheme of water that characterises the place. The Emperor had invited a large number of residents of the place to luncheon, and as a preliminary entertainment had arranged for a number of water fêtes upon the miniature lakes. On the broadest side of one of these arose a well-constructed amphitheatre of solid masonry, and here the guests assembled to witness the swimming contests and the canoe racing and polling, all of which were performed by the natives, whose kindred, wrapped in the inevitable zerape, witnessed in sullen silence the achievements of their youths. The surroundings made the charm of the place. The continued arbours, affording complete shade to all the walks, and here and there reaching quite across the smaller fountains and pools, cooled the somewhat too highly heated atmosphere at midday, and from every vantage ground the grand mesa, with the neighbour-

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ing mountains beyond, furnished a complete picture.

In the afternoon a party of equestrians set forth for the Acapancingo where Cortez had his first sugar plantation. They rode slowly over the rough ways, and forded the mountain streams with light hearts and cheery voices, being treated on their return to a sunset similar to that which the Emperor had been so much impressed with the previous night.

The second day Maximilian, accompanied by Señorita Escabar and two aides, as well as by four mounted guards, set forth for Xociocollo, the Aztec ruins of which are amongst the most ancient, extensive and complete of any in Mexico. It is distant sixteen miles from Cuernavaca. The road thither is at first a fairly passable highway for a few miles, then it broadens into the bed of a dry stream, where there is scarcely a spot that a horse may place his foot upon, other than a rolling rock. Then it winds over the mesa and tortuously wanders, rougher, narrower and more irregular than before, towards a distant plateau. Now and then a faint trace of vegetation is discerned; then again, a slight sign of a small settlement, and once an Indian village of great antiquity and squalor is passed. On all sides the sky-lines are mountain ranges.

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This is Southern Mexico. Vegetation has become scarce, and what little there exists of it is scant of life and colourless.

The road, now nothing more than a trail, winds its way along the hill-sides, seeking the easiest gradients, resting, as it were, in a long line upon a hill-side more accommodating than its neighbours, then suddenly descending, it abruptly approaches the high, rocky side of a stream, which far below flows rapidly through a flume; and here a bridge of one arch, and of a width just sufficient to allow one horseman to pass, jumps the space to the opposite precipice. It is a work of stone of great antiquity and primitive strength, that has played its part through decades of centuries. The party passed in true Indian file, and, surmounting the hill by another tortuous trail, came to a halt upon a treeless mesa, from which is seen far to the south a line of hills similar in shape to truncated pyramids. A brief pause suffices for horse and rider.

Again the party proceeds, in a direction more regular than heretofore, towards the fortifications, which as they advance appear more clearly to be the work of man rather than of nature. Far or near no human habitation appears; occasionally a few cattle graze reluctantly upon the

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scanty grass, whilst here and there a bunch of horses and burros glean a scanty sustenance from the surface of the arid country. Little attention is given either. The progress of the journey is slow nevertheless, and opportunities for the interchange of conversation rare, as the trail never varies from the single, rocky path that accommodates only one at a time. Gradually, very gradually, the party approaches its barren destination, the ascent to which is reached by the same insecure and frequently obscure road. At last, ascending rather more abruptly than before, the party come at once upon a great upheaval of ground, resembling a long circle of breastworks, and once within them are in full view of the temple, which from an unknown civilisation has come down intact to modern times. Here for the first time the equestrians alight, at the base of the grand and highly ornamental citadel of the vast works around them, and giving over their horses to the broad-brimmed attendants, they walk about the unsheltered ruins, in silence viewing the hieroglyphics which to them meaninglessly stand forth in marvellous clearness.

None of the group has more than a general knowledge of what the entire work in its details means. That the entire enclosure and the

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temple itself are prehistoric is undisputed ; but it is unknown for what purpose they were erected. The remains of an ancient place of worship is immediately before them : a truncated pyramid of great face stones, with warlike figures on each, and a trace of stairway on the southern side leading to the inner part. The elements have wrought little effacement upon the exterior, and if only the key of interpretation were given, much might be gleaned from the well-preserved faces, massive and bold ; but alas ! all is obscure. One wonders not only as to the necessity for such works, but also how sufficient water could be obtained for a force of men so far above the level land below. But the mystery remains unchallenged, even darkened by the light of the knowledge of the affairs of to-day. It is but one of many prehistoric ruins, part fortifications, part temple to an unknown god, unquestionably warlike, rude, full of strength and force, with signs struggling with the firmness of nature to tell a tale, replete with frowning warnings. Seriously they stand, remote from human habitations, contemplating the ruin visited by the curious and the searcher after ancient light alike, a pile more impressive perhaps in retrospect than when one is actually viewing it.

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The party lunched under what little shade was granted by the great sloping north side of the temple, amidst the insect life that made itself noticeable everywhere. Far away in the east the outline of the ancient line of fortifications appeared distinctly, and nearer at hand the plan of the neighbouring breastworks was as clearly discerned as if they had been of modern construction. When the repast was finished Maximilian turned to the ladies and bade them take what comfort and rest they might, with the restricted means at hand, and with his military aide set forth on horseback to make a complete circuit of the enclosures. It was over an hour before he returned. Then he remarked that he had satisfied his curiosity without adding to his knowledge, having gone six miles along the lines. The only discovery he had made was that from a certain point, looking nearly due north, the lines of the cathedral of Cuernavaca could be seen.

"Now," he said cheerfully, "we can proceed back to our Acapancingo, if you ladies are willing. Home we must go, despite the long route and the present weary means of reaching it."

With that they started to repeat the morning's journey. As the party drew near to their abode

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they forgot the fatigue of the day in the delight of witnessing a repetition of the sunset upon Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, which had entranced Maximilian.

"This is one of the most beautiful of landscapes in the world—perhaps quite the most beautiful," he said. "At least it is the most beautiful landscape that I, in a somewhat extended experience, have ever seen—and so fleeting! How satisfactory, too; so infinite, yet so simple, as all things from God are. The mysteries that surround the ruins of Xociocollo are like all else that man has done in this great territory of Mexico—inscrutable! I have journeyed here extensively, and never have I gathered any tangible information regarding the works of man whether ancient or modern. A nation without a literature is as a man without a memory. Only a very active man can do without the garment woven of historical recollections. It is an excellent cover for mediocre people. Nobody can be entirely without it. We all have something we wish to hide. Perception is life; everything else is only the vegetating of matter. The faculty of perception is an attribute of the soul. The body without the soul cannot perceive anything. When we die we shall encounter a new kind

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of perception—one to which the bodily tools
are unnecessary."

And the soft hamlet where he dwelt
Is one of that complexion which seems made
For those who their mortality have felt
And sought a refuge from their hopes decayed
In the deep umbrage of a green hill's shade,
Which shows a distant prospect far away,
Of busy cities, now in vain displayed,
For they can live no farther,
And the ray of a bright sun
Can make sufficient holiday.

Maximilian was happy in Cuernavaca. In relation to the extent of his sojourn in Mexico, it was a brief visit. It is doubtful whether, from the time of his arrival in Vera Cruz, a single day had passed in which he was not fully conscious of the sacrifices he had made—save on those rare occasions when he had been momentarily thrilled by a sense of power.

IX

EVERY Mexican town of high or low degree has certain striking Spanish characteristics of arrangement, and each city bears the imprint of the Moorish-Spanish type of architecture added to the ground-plan of the place. All important places have ample water supplies, and thus, by contrast with the general aridity of the country, the verdure of the city plaza and of the rows of trees along the main streets appears doubly striking to the stranger's eyes as he approaches it from the long overland journey.

The city of Puebla del Santa Angela is especially impressive upon such an occasion. Its great age, its venerable ecclesiastical piles, the rich greens of its plants as they cluster about the great square, lend a soft umbrage to the place, all the more accentuated because it is in living contrast with the bright, clear sunlight and with the occasional glimpses of the rich, highly coloured, glazed tiled domes of neighbouring churches.

As we walk leisurely across the plaza on a summer afternoon it is natural that our attention

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should be attracted by any moving human figure —so few are stirring at the time. At first there appears to be nothing to arrest the attention, but a second glance reveals a figure moving along under the walls, whose lumbering gait brings to mind a familiar personage often to be seen pacing the deck of the *Novara* on its long voyage from Trieste to Mexico. As we approach nearer we see the simple garb of the man is that of a priest, a member of the Society of Jesus. The massive frame bears an equally massive head, and that head, borne well forward as if conscious of its weight, is illumined by a countenance at once ponderous and impressive, brightened by a keen glance of the eyes and sharpened by the close, firm lines of the mouth. It is the Abbé Fischer, with whom we became familiar in the foregoing chapters. His sudden disappearance rather left the impression that he had quit the royal party for a purpose. He was not the sort of man that a critical observer would ever think of as doing anything other than as a part of a continuous and far-reaching scheme. His appearance was the same as we were familiar with a year before, excepting that now his face and hands were of that peculiar, dry, brown colour and texture which the high, arid mountain climate of Mexico gives to the

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human skin after weeks of exposure in the saddle. Riding on horseback is the customary mode of travel for itinerant priests and wayfarers who wish to arrange their stages quite in accordance with their own convenience and requirements.

Father Fischer since we last saw him had journeyed almost continually; he had ridden the circuit from Puebla north to San Louis Potosi, and thence to Zacatecas and Guanajuata in the middle north, and westward to Guadalahara, where his longest stay had been made. From thence he wended his way—always alone—to the mountain fastnesses of the west towards Acapulco far down on the Pacific coast; and after a considerable stay there he had gone inland east to Oaxaca, his extreme southern point, which was still in the possession of the Revolutionists, or, as they termed themselves, "Republicans"; and then, carefully avoiding the city of Mexico, he had retraced his steps north to the City of the Angels of the Faith, where he made his immediate report of his mission to the head of the Order there resident.

As he disappears from our sight he at once joins a group of Jesuits, who, judging from the nature of their greeting, now meet him for the first time since his return. Some are residents

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of Puebla, and others of the brothers have come many hundreds of miles to receive final instructions from our far-reaching Abbé regarding the execution of the plans upon which he had so diligently laboured. After a cheerful reception, the Abbé, placing his great hat upon the table in front of him, at once entered upon the subject before them, with his customary directness.

"I shall," he said, "read you a letter I to-day received from Mexico. As we have long anticipated, Maximilian will in a few days issue a proclamation of his intended visit to the provincial capitals of his Empire. This journey will follow the usual route of all such journeys in Mexico, by reason of geographical features of the country, and it will also be governed by all that the French Marshal will have done in the way of clearing the country of the Revolutionists, both to the north and south. In anticipation of the success of the French army of occupation, I widened the circuit of my journey, to the south as well as to the north, so that if the Emperor goes beyond what are now our confines it will not be to a state wholly unprepared by us for his reception. He is to familiarise himself with the military, political, social and industrial conditions of the Empire. The first we have no authority over, the last we have only an indirect influence

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upon. It is with the political and social relations between the Emperor, the Church and the State that we are concerned, and over which we exercise some direction. Our aim is to make the Emperor's visit welcomed as enthusiastically as possible. This we can always do by proper foresight and care of the lower order of Mexicans and Indians in all our large cities. This is a matter of comparative ease. Crowds and banners and holidays and music will easily accomplish our design of welcome. What is of equal importance is the complete covering up of all feeling of opposition to the imperialistic idea."

"As a matter of fact," interrupted one of the most attentive of the Abbé's listeners, with a familiar and agreeable smile, "there is among the masses only the most vague idea of what the Empire means. We have endeavoured to make the Emperor known to the people as a Messiah who represents our Church, and one to whom God has given this great, brilliantly uniformed and officered French army for their service and salvation!"

"Yes," replied Father Fischer, his face having relaxed into an expression of as much benignity as it was capable of, whilst he listened with an air of great regard, "yes, that is quite the best method of approaching the minds of the vast

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majority ; but, as I was intending to say, beside the task of picturing to the mind of the masses a positive blessing coming upon them, represented by the Emperor's rule, we design to disguise all semblance of the traces of Republicanism, which is constantly showing itself, even where the successes of the French army have been most pronounced. Our Order has always to face facts," he said, in his slowest and most emphatic manner. " Its next step after ascertaining them is to master them ; and if that complete mastery is impossible for the moment, then it is our duty to so conceal and pervert them as the necessities of each case may demand, and the wisdom of the object in view directs. There is throughout the country a Republic—not an Empire, as we would wish. The masses count for nothing but show. The intelligent classes control Mexico to-day, as they always have done ; and that intelligent class," exclaimed the holy Father impressively, " is chiefly limited to the property-holders. The fact is therefore clear—that if the masses count for nothing, and the lay property-holders insist upon holding the reins of government for their own purposes, then the clergy, representing the Church that holds such vast possessions of estates, must exert its influence for a government best suited to the masses for

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whom it holds its great wealth in trust. It is of no importance that the Emperor, busy as he is with ideas of organisation for his government, should in any way be aware of any other feeling throughout the length and breadth of the land than that which we can portray to him through the bringing together of our people in multitudes, who always take the expression of their will from us. Therefore, no pains and ingenuity are to be spared to give the appearance that the Empire is well established in the hearts of the people, and to keep the Emperor from being in touch with those who would inform him of the true state of affairs for their selfish interests."

"I suppose," broke in the Abbé of Guadalajara, speaking for the first time, "your Reverence will give each of us as long a notice as possible of the exact date of arrival of the Emperor and his party at our respective cities."

"So far as possible," responded the Abbé Fischer; "and that possibility will be perfected by the watchfulness which some of our brotherhood will constantly keep upon the itinerary of the royal party. Where the aides of the Emperor are sent in advance to our cities, to prepare for his comfort and entertainment, it will be for our

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brothers to see that such hospitality as the place affords is dispensed to him, and that the Emperor always passes his sojourn under our roof or that of our lay brothers. Inasmuch as the cellars of our chapter-houses contain the choice wines of the best vintages of Europe, and our *haciendas* the best slaughterings and products of the gardens of Mexico, the Emperor, whose enjoyment of the pleasures of the table has been well impressed upon you, will not be long in discovering that the ‘primrose path of dalliance’ is not at all incompatible with his reception by the people. So far as is now known, the itinerary is as follows, which our Brother will read.”

The Abbé sat down, and after turning some papers slowly over in his hands a few moments, handed them to the priest nearest him to read aloud. After this there was more talk relating to the details of the scheme, and where further, or individual, instruction was necessary, it was given, and rehearsed with the utmost care. They were all selected men, and very little, if any, reiteration was necessary. Of studious disposition and bright intelligence, keenly interested in the work before them, realising it to be a part of a perpetual task, a link to be well forged in the process of creating an eternal Christianity,

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they imbibed the spirit of their leader with an unfaltering enthusiasm.

Puebla was the first city Maximilian visited during the regency. He arrived there with a full military escort. He had with him Marshal Bazaine and his staff, and proceeded on his journey in a typical mountain coach drawn by the four fine white mules which he had succeeded in purchasing from the bull ring after the carnival of slaughter was finished for the season. Maximilian had been in Puebla, on his way to the capital from Vera Cruz. It was natural that he should on this occasion, as on his previous visit, go to the Bishop's palace for his lodgment. It was natural, too, that his Majesty should greet his old travelling companion, Father Fischer, with great cordiality, after the separation of so many months, and inquire as to his many occupations during the interval. The Abbé appeared entirely frank in informing the Emperor of where he had been, and in stating that so long had been his absence in Europe upon an errand so unusual that the field of his customary labours at home felt the lack of the hand of the husbandman, and that he had therefore done in a twelve-month all the pruning and the weeding of years.

"I am," he said, "like the person of religion in Chaucer's prologue :

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“Upon his feet and in his hand a staffe.
This noble ensample to his flock he gave
That first he wroughte,
And afterward he taughte.”

The Emperor laughed, saying: “Your Reverence looks well after so much exposure. I hope the shelter and the table were always excellent. You doubtless can tell me much that will add to my physical comfort upon my present journey, as I confess I am always a gainer by taking instruction from the well-informed traveller who has made a journey in advance of me.”

It so happened that Maximilian started from Puebla on his grand tour the day following the announcement in Mexico of the surrender of General Lee at Appomattox. He little thought that the event could have any bearing upon his destiny. This topic and the affairs of the United States generally were the chief theme of conversation before the company assembled at the Bishop’s table that night. The dinner was thoroughly Mexican, and served in the palace at an early hour of the afternoon. The guests, with the exception of Marshal Bazaine and his chief of staff, were members of the Bishop’s household, which temporarily included the Abbé Fischer. The surroundings were of the simplest, ample but very plain. The rooms were very bare,

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devoid of all attempts at decoration and furnishing beyond the necessary comforts of an executive officer of a great diocese.

"How remarkable it is," said Maximilian in conversation with the Marshal, "but at the same time logical, that people who are forced to live in celibacy always surround themselves with barren things, and like to deal with them. Monks and nuns make artificial flowers (which stand under glass to no purpose), fruits made of wax, and useless toys."

"We have our various diversions, even if they appear in their outward expression as irrelevant and blank. A soldier's life is so tumultuous as to leave not sufficient time for the making of toys. Undoubtedly, he might find time for certain kinds of cultivation."

"It is a pity," remarked the Emperor laughingly, "that one cannot dig money out of the earth with bayonets. It would detract naught from the glory of the exploit of arms, and would add much to the leisure of the government."

The Marshal, not particularly pleased with the Emperor's rather debasing suggestion, and yet not wishing to be argumentative, said: "The phrase has recently been invented in the United States that 'money is the sinews of war,' and I

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fancy that much has been gained by the Northern States because of its inexhaustible supply. In any event, they have had a successful issue out of their difficulty, according to the news that reaches us to-day. They have been less insistent of late," he said, with a threatening gesture, "regarding the Monroe doctrine."

"The Monroe doctrine," exclaimed the Emperor, "I have always regarded as a most presumptuous piece of arrogance, especially on the part of a republic—a republic," he said thoughtfully, as was his wont when entering upon a serious subject, "that has acquired a portion of its territory from robber bands of Mexico, as in the case of Texas, and other vast regions by unwarranted conquest of Mexico itself, a struggling republic too. I have always looked with suspicion upon such theories. Nations have constitutions and policies, but doctrines had best be left to the Church for promulgation. Father Fischer," he said, directing his remarks towards where the priest sat, "have you any work here showing just what is embodied in the Monroe doctrine of America?"

"We have our historical collection to refer to in the library," the priest replied, at once keenly alive to the trend of the talk. "I will send for them, your Majesty. As far as I remember,

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the statement of the doctrine runs 'somewhat this way :

"'The United States would not view any intervention for the purpose of oppressing any Spanish-American States, or controlling, in any way, their destiny, by a European Power, in any other light than as a manifestation of an unfriendly disposition to them.'"

" It grew out of the supposed intention of the Holy Alliance in the fore part of the century, as I have understood it," Maximilian remarked, with a genial bow towards the Abbé, by way of acknowledgment of thanks. " It was thought desirable for the United States to keep European Powers off the American continents, when once their first authority was broken. I understand vaguely its purport, but I fail to see either how it could be enforced or why even a decent respect is due it."

"'Might makes right,'" said Bazaine, now joining in the conversation. " The United States claims the right of intervention on this continent, and with the cessation of hostilities between the Northern and Southern States, it remains to be seen how far the Administration, as they term it, is prepared to go in the case of your Majesty's throne."

" I consider the doctrine, as applied to Mexico,

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a piece of impertinence," said the Emperor, with more vehemence than was customary. "One satisfaction anyway is the thought that the Republic will be a long while recovering from its recent fighting and this exhaustive war. It will be in no position to try to threaten us here. I have understood that in diplomacy it is known among nations to be possessed of a more bull-dog tenacity than the mother country."

"I cannot say that I agree with your Majesty's views about the internal condition of the United States. They will come out of this better prepared for immediate emergencies, whether they arise on this continent or in Europe, than any nation on earth. Fancy a force of such great numbers as those in the field now, and inured to the arts of war through four years in that horrible climate, with its change from summer to winter, each of perishing degree! There has been so much said of this 'Monroe doctrine,'" the Marshal continued earnestly, after a moment's pause, "that I have not been negligent of its bearing; and I have written fully to his Imperial Majesty, Louis Napoleon, that I think, with the Northern arms victorious, there is likely to be trouble here over it. Just let them have time to collect themselves, and it will be found that Napoleon himself will have to consider many

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points in relation to the maintenance of his forces in Mexico, and perhaps be obliged to form anew his views thereon."

The Marshal stopped speaking somewhat abruptly, as if willing to let the subject drop; but the Emperor was quite in a mood to run the discussion down to a fine finish, being eager to profit to the same extent as Louis Napoleon by learning the views which the Marshal had seen fit to send to his own Emperor. It will doubtless be remembered that both emperors a few years before held a very contemptuous opinion of the great Republic. Since Maximilian came to Mexico he had probably regarded a threat, with any degree of force behind it, from the American Administration as the least likely thing to happen. Maximilian, as monarch, had never given the United States any consideration. Such was his belief in a monarchical government for all nations that he was unable to conceive of anything but failure growing out of the American Republic. History showed, he said briefly, that republics were never firmly established in the brotherhood of nations and that their tendencies were universally baneful and their success not to be countenanced. He was now neither more ready than formerly to acknowledge the potency of the United States, nor more

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willing to investigate the conditions arising that would dictate its policy. What he desired at present was to know what views Marshal Bazaine had sent across seas to the French throne, realising the influence of authenticated views, such as the Marshal's would be, upon the Emperor Napoleon's attitude towards Mexican affairs. Evidently the Marshal was of the same opinion, and, being aware of the position each Emperor had taken, he fenced for a few minutes against being drawn out further. When this was no longer possible, he endeavoured to hint at his willingness to give his views, but suggested that a more desirable occasion be taken for it, saying :

"You Majesty is here among your clerical allies, who wish you 'God-speed' upon your journey, and whose views upon the internal affairs of Mexico are of infinitely more value than my opinions, perhaps hastily formed, upon remote questions of external policies."

But neither the Emperor nor the Bishop and his household expressed any such wish. The clergy at the table had been most attentive listeners, probably no body of men in Mexico were so thoroughly desirous of light upon this subject as they, for they knew the greatness of their northern neighbour to its full, and were well

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aware that when once the civil war was brought to a close the Government would immediately take up the question of foreign intervention in Mexico. They had long foreseen this. They knew, indeed, that the peril of disruption which threatened the United States was a factor which had made the creation of the Mexican Empire possible ; and they were never for a moment idle in working to secure the maintenance of a large European army in their country,—first, to fulfil its mission of establishing a Roman Catholic Emperor on the throne, and then to act as a warning to the Government of the United States not to venture upon a new aggression.

There was no reason why Marshal Bazaine should not have freely expressed his views to the company present, composed, as it was, of his allies, any more than to his sovereign. His position was perfectly well understood. Whatever had been the object of the French army of occupation in Mexico originally, its present design was the establishment of Maximilian securely on the throne as soon as possible. Therefore, when pressed for further views that he had given, Bazaine said, with considerable show of rough force and a complete grasp upon the situation:

“ Your Majesty will do well to give the conditions prevailing in the United States to-day your

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uttermost attention. The arms of the North have been victorious everywhere, and the North is so little exhausted by the effort it has made that the contest, however great, was certainly not its supreme effort. From to-day the strength of that nation, as a republic, will spring by leaps and bounds to be greater than heretofore. The people have shown themselves not only marvelously resourceful in a great and tragic emergency ; but they have shown the world the inexhaustible abundance of the natural resources of the country in which they live. The spirit of Republicanism is unshaken ; in fact it is more firmly established than ever—not even militarism is possible—and when the time comes that essentially practical people will lay down their arms and take up commercial pursuits, as if they had never entered upon war. But before that time comes your Majesty's government will be warned to quit the continent ; and it will depend upon the French Emperor whether that request will have to be complied with, because it is altogether inconceivable that the forces which your Majesty has at his command, native troops and foreign allies, could cope with those that could be sent to back the American demand."

Marshal Bazaine sat to the left of the Bishop, directly opposite the Emperor, to whom the

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remarks were immediately directed ; but the tone in which they were delivered was loud enough for all about the table to hear distinctly.

Maximilian had winced somewhat as the full force of the argument, new to him, had become apparent. The brief silence was somewhat anxiously broken by Father Fischer, who might well consider himself privileged in the conversation, since the Emperor had first looked to him that afternoon for information. He appeared at once to throw the entire weight of his immense personality against any alarm that Bazaine's argument might have created in the Sovereign's mind.

"There is one phase of the matter," began the priest, "which it may be well to consider. For the past five years the people of the United States, however puissant and however resourceful, have been fully occupied at home. I am able to give an account of them, as it has been my privilege to pass much time in the States during this and earlier periods. The attitude of the people is one of self-centred confidence. They are little experienced in the actual affairs governing the progress of foreign nations, Asiatic or European. They regard themselves as the only people who have developed during this century. They look upon all Asiatics as degenerates,

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and all Europeans as unprogressive. They consider themselves as having nothing to learn from any people on earth, and able to vanquish with their arms any or all nations. But with this wonderful and moving instinct goes the saving grace of self-satisfaction, which leads them as a people to stay at home and so to cultivate domestic commerce. It would be an error to suppose that they, in their industrial pride, would turn aside and interfere with their neighbour, who has obtained at last a government as Mr Lincoln has said, "of, for and by the people!" An Administration of the United States government never actively takes up public questions, or even frames a conception of them. When it has a policy of statecraft, which is seldom, it rather chooses to put a quietus upon vexatious public opinion; and only by an exaggerated furore of the lashing Press does it attend to anything beyond the ordinary duties of the executive."

The speaker paused for a moment and was just on the point of continuing when Marshal Bazaine, following him closely, said somewhat brusquely: "Just tell me, then, what point you wish to make?"

The ready and skilful priest turned to him, without the show of the least annoyance,

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and said : "That the Monroe doctrine is not likely to be enforced, or carried further, by the United States in connection with the Empire here established, largely, perhaps, because of the inherent love the American people have of fair play, an attribute which, to be fully understood, must be felt by contact with them."

The specious argument was so intangible that the Marshal, though a ready, straightforward speaker, had no facts at his command to refute it, other than a reiteration of his former opinions. He had the training of a fighter rather than of a disputant. He was ever ready to withdraw from an argument, and to trust to a quiet talk to convince any hearer afterward whose interest might be sufficient to listen to him. The reverse was Father Fischer's temperament and method ; an argument was his chief desire, and the statements with which he maintained it were backed frequently by facts bearing strongly upon the matter in dispute ; and when facts were wanting, or adverse to the point he wished to make, he either abandoned them for spurious coin, or forged them from twisted metal out of his abundant faculty for chicanery, to meet the ends he aimed at. But one end was ever present to him — the substantial establishment of the Bourbon Roman Catholic Emperor on the throne,

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who should be so loyal to the Church that had placed him there that there could be no further embarrassment to the Church in Mexico, and that it might continue the triumphant work of God. As the holy man had ceased, from the attitude of a listener, Maximilian raised his chin somewhat above the level of its usual bearing and for a moment eyed critically the inscrutable and ponderous face of the priest, which, ever free from relaxation, was now slightly turned from him. It was a face which no views or excitement could flush, or any emotion awaken from the grasp of its imperturbability. It was the first critical glance that the Emperor had ever given the priest, and it left him precisely as uncertain as before.

The attitude of those at the board at that moment was worthy of a painter's brush. From a Mexican standpoint it was historical. The clear complexion and flaxen hair of the sovereign were in strong contrast with the dark and somewhat coarse appearance of his associates; his calm, quiet, high-bred countenance with the plebeian faces of the others at the table. The dignity and softness of the expression, denoting not only sufficient strength of purpose, but assurance of consideration to any who sought an audience, was strikingly opposed to the characteristics of the military and clerical forces

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surrounding him. The man was ever the gentleman—that was his first attribute; his second was his devout attitude to the Church of Rome. There were many things that a man of coarser breeding, or rougher fibre, or less mature religious convictions could have done — possibly without criticism — which Maximilian was incapable of conceiving, still less of considering. That was at once his strength and his weakness. His strength inasmuch as it enabled him to conceive and do right always where questions of ethics arose, whether the ethics of statecraft, or philosophy, or science, or religion; and his weakness so far as it disqualified him from that quick grasp of situations which, if possessed, would have enabled him, with one powerful snatch, to have torn from before him the cloak that all men wear when promoting designs, leaving them naked before him. It is the faculty of knowing men, and selecting men for especial services, that makes for greatness. Maximilian was in no wise a weakling. He was strong beyond the ordinary or average man; but he lacked the qualities that go to make up a successful cross-examiner at the Bar, with all his defensive unfeelingness; the qualities which enable the surgeon to take the keen-pointed blade and

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thrust it on its errand of mercy ; the general in the field to burn his bridges, or cut loose from his base of supplies ; the mariner on the high seas to jettison his cargo in order to save his storm-tossed craft. The rough hand goes with the red hand. Success, however worshipped, is more frequently cruel than kind, more generally found among the coarse than the refined.

The company that we have been watching at the hospitable board of the Archbishop of Puebla seemed from the moment that Father Fischer ceased speaking to be more prone to discuss the viands before them than the topics of state that had until then so engrossed their attention. It seemed to some that the priest, though fervent, was offensive, not perhaps by words and expressions, but in the manner of delivery. No one was daring enough, or complaisant enough, to plunge in again. The Emperor was so tardy in breaking the silence that it became almost ominous. When he spoke, it was with one of his most amiable smiles that he covered the seeming irrelevance of his remark :

“A prince stands above parties, for in a well-regulated state all parties should be subject to him. Princes who are leaders of political parties ought not to be surprised when they perish with

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their party's downfall. *Audiatur et altera pars.* The prince who hears only the organs of one party becomes narrowed, ignores other phases of events, thinks and works only in one direction, becomes unjust to others, loses every value as a statesman, and himself suffers by his partiality."

Whatever wisdom the remark contained, there was probably none at the table who lent more reluctant assent to it than Father Fischer. He was a partisan, and every step taken was for what he considered partisan purposes. The man had neither imagination nor conscience. He was one of those remarkable persons, sometimes found among the clergy, to whom success is a duty.

The Archbishop, who till now had taken little part in the talk, being content with listening, turned it in an agreeable manner to the conditions of the local parties in Puebla; and thenceforth there was little opportunity for the Emperor receiving further light upon matters which after events showed to be of the greatest moment. Maximilian was, nevertheless, left with the thought that princes ought never to forget that the persons with whom they surround themselves are of great importance as feelers to ascertain the ideas and opinions of the outside world. He was led to form an intention which he acted upon at an early hour.

X

MAXIMILIAN and the French Marshal certainly had great opportunity for familiar acquaintance. The latter did not accompany his chief during the entire journey, but many of the early days of the tour they passed together in the white-covered diligence of the country, labouring along over the rough, dusty roads of stone and sand. The Marshal usually was interested in describing to the Emperor the routes taken by his army and the battle grounds, and he always found an attentive and intelligent listener of retentive memory. As they toiled along, hour after hour, and the military side of the situation exhausted itself, Maximilian invariably took up the subject of the State, which ever seemed to offer grounds for discussion. He never sat long either with the Empress, the Marshal or his priest without giving succinct expressions of his theories and intentions. To them he looked for help; and, therefore, with them he made his opinions live most vividly. Bazaine met these views usually with a responsive and assenting silence; Charlotta with that inquisitiveness which her lesser experience would lead us to look for; the

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priest with the aggressive antagonism of one who wished to eliminate all thought from his companion's mind, intent upon making it his own.

"The position of sovereigns and princes," remarked the Emperor to his Marshal one morning, as they drove leisurely along, "is not based on old customs alone, but is a result also of their own efforts and labour."

"It is fortunate that it is so here in Mexico," replied the man of arms, "for if it were otherwise little good could come from the old customs of this benighted country. Every period has its great qualities as well as its great faults. It is stupid not to acknowledge the first, and dangerous to try to root out the latter, as the great crowd and every individual must be dealt with; and only a great creative genius can sometimes meet such an experiment with success."

"All countries should have a constitution," continued the Emperor.

"This country," said the Marshal, "is far from ready for it, your Majesty."

"Nevertheless," replied Maximilian thoughtfully, "however much a constitution may be dreaded as a bugbear, it clearly causes a distribution of the weight and a restoration of the equilibrium of the State; and it is at the same

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time a control which the honest man does not need to fear. It is said to be a constant struggle between the ruler and the ruled, but he who says so does not interpret it honestly. It is an alliance between them. But even if it were a struggle, let us not forget, life also is a struggle."

The Marshal sat mute, and the Emperor, after a momentary pause, continued :

"Even if we cannot deny that the constitutional system is something like a see-saw, there is not any great danger in it, if we only place the board on a steady and secure centre of honest laws. Entirely absolute states have always originated under lawless circumstances. There was always an alliance between prince and people in a happy and honest period."

"A period not yet come to Mexico," replied the Marshal. "They lean, as a people—the masses—absolutely on their God as expressed by the forms of the Church."

"The entirely healthy and intelligent man," exclaimed the Emperor, "does not need any help. God has given him the power of self-centralisation."

The Frenchman could not refrain a laughing response to so radical an expression of reliance. It pleased him, but he could hardly fancy their

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ally, the Abbé Fischer, wishing it to go beyond his ears—an attitude the caution of which he admitted to himself by a light-hearted laugh.

"The Abbé Fischer," he said, "is a very ambitious man, if the tenacity with which he holds an idea may count for anything. I am inclined to think God an agent of his, rather than him a sub-vicar of the Almighty—judging him by his actions."

The scenes of French military occupation were passed, and even the Marshal admitted that the popular demonstrations which took place everywhere were sufficient to justify the position taken by the clerical party that the people were strongly in favour of the Empire. With all his experience of the Mexicans, he found that the organised welcome of the masses greeting the Emperor was so complete that not a sign of any other sentiment than spontaneous good-will was discernible. A Mexican crowd is different in many respects from the ordinary crowd of other civilisations. The Indian blend in it makes for marked seriousness and silence. There is nothing in it of the blithesomeness and gaiety which characterise many of the people of Europe, nor of the earnestness of the Saxons; no spontaneity of good nature, no furore which at times marks the Spaniards. It was on the dead level

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of silent wonder and astonishment, so that it was all the harder to get at the actual feeling of the people. The mystery of silence, without shrouding, confuses the whole sentiment of a great gathering; and it is only upon such an occasion as a bull-fight, or a battle, that it assumes a noticeable excitement. The European visitors had to take account of this fact in making mental notes of that which went on before them.

Marshal Bazaine left the party at Orizaba, as a farther extension of the itinerary to the south began to be discussed. He was northward bound, to undertake the expulsion of the Republican forces from Mexican soil—the last great effort. When he withdrew, the Emperor was left entirely with his clerical advisers.

Maximilian's journey from Orizaba to the south was through the rich countries known as *tierras calientes*. They were the most fruitful of all Mexico, rich in great variety of sub-tropical fruits and crops, which go to increase the wealth of the inhabitant. Fruitful valleys, where plantations of coffee and tobacco nestle by the well-watered hill-sides, look up upon the vast mountains not infrequently crowned by perpetual snow. Here and there a hamlet glistens on a far-off mountain-side, like a gem in a field of emerald, while the

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lazy tinkle of bells upon flocks and herds indicates the occasional presence of the nomad. Suddenly from out the woodland appears a wandering band of Indians in aboriginal attire, the men upon horses, and the women walking, heavily burdened, just behind. All are in gay colours and wear great sombreros of rough fabric, for the penetrating rays of the sun make all seek the best protection they can.

Each day's stage brought not only new scenes but also an accentuated evidence of the resources of the land; and the observing mind of the sovereign received encouragement and assurances of the peace and happiness of his people. Father Fischer and he were becoming more thoroughly acquainted than before. Even upon the long ocean journey they had not been so closely brought together. The sea is interesting, but frequently the same, day in and day out; and to maintain a continual conversation an enlivened imagination is essential. Now, however, the topics were forced upon them, and the great industries of the inhabitants were ever suggesting comparisons and new designs.

As they approached a town, early one afternoon, Father Fischer pointed out the scene of an action which had taken place only a few years before between two Republican factions, both

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in revolution against the principal government of the time.

"Bayonets turned against a foreign enemy are weapons of defence," the Emperor remarked; "turned against the home country, they can only be used to commit suicide. I have often wondered if mankind were the better for the invention of gunpowder. Think of the handiness of modern weapons for mischief!—the revolver, for instance. If half the energy that goes into their manufacture and subsequent use were turned into channels of usefulness, such as printing and the disseminating of books that contain real knowledge, think, my dear Father, what strength would accrue to the people!"

"Yes," replied the priest respectfully, "I see and I feel that in my own work. The mission of my brotherhood is so peaceful that it lends confidence and strength in turn, rendering arms quite undesirable; and there is no instance in this country of any of our brothers ever carrying weapons, even when, for the first time, they have been among wild tribes of Indians. Great self-reliance and strong nerves," said the Abbé, smiling, "are the more desirable for us."

"Self-reliance, I grant you; but it has been my observation," the Emperor said quickly, as if wishing to file his objection, "that the man

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who has strong phlegmatic nerves has never a scrupulous conscience. He has, indeed, little use for it, as he seldom commits any transgressions or crimes, because strong passions are usually unknown to him; but if such a man should develop these passions, then he is terrible, as nothing warns him or drives him from his purpose."

A remark like this, from the Emperor to the priest, always seemed to touch the latter upon a vulnerable spot. In spite of the fact that the Emperor was ever gentle and frank in his speech, the priest was inclined to take his words as directed to himself personally. Although the Emperor was his prey, this man of coarse breeding ever felt the spirit of refinement and sincerity of purpose that marked his every act and word.

"One great objection," continued Maximilian, as they proceeded slowly along through the small cluster of the buildings of the town, gazing at the few inhabitants who were standing in their doorways, "is the realisation, which this journey is forcing upon me, that this country is so worthy of a struggle. I feel that I am willing to sacrifice every personal comfort and pleasure in life to reach a helping hand to a people who need so slight assistance to make of themselves a great nation. Struggle is the stimulus of life; if it

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stops, then the machinery stops—the spirit has taken flight. There will be a continuous struggle, as long as the spirit stays and the heart is beating; only in struggle is life, which the last struggle of death ends. What these people need most is a political organisation, which they shall not only feel, but feel enough confidence in to lean upon, because they believe it to be enduring. Then they should learn to obey, and then learn—in order that later they may teach—how to command, and how to teach. They need a moral and mental raising up, which, I regret to say, the Church has not yet considered of importance."

"The Church," replied Father Fischer, "is at the present time considering such designs as may be in conformity with your Majesty's previously expressed wish."

"I am glad to hear it," said the Emperor frankly. "Doubtless you can inform me what plan has been adopted. It should be comprehensive as well as practical."

"Unfortunately, your Majesty, I cannot, for my work is so entirely different as to take me away from the monasteries where such designs are fostered and gradually worked out."

"Ah! if you would only devote part of your time and great energy to that very object, and

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work it out quickly, I should be the better pleased. For the ruler there is to-day, to-morrow and yesterday. If one thinks of to-morrow, and acts to-day, one sows blessings and reaps fruit. If one only thinks of to-day, then to-morrow frequently takes one by surprise. If one only speaks of yesterday, and acts accordingly, then one will not even keep abreast of the times. I want about me men of action; and I look upon you as one of them. There is another thing. I wonder that, amidst this flood of revolution, there is any administration of justice whatsoever—a most important part of modern, as it was of ancient, systems of government. The true human society is founded upon mutual forbearance and forgiveness. Yet it is seldom that one finds a highly developed sense of justice. Everywhere one finds instead party hatred and local interests. Nobody puts himself in the place of another. That is the reason of innumerable examples of injustice and colossal mistakes."

"One must applaud your Majesty's impartiality," responded the priest to this lengthy expression of opinion; "nevertheless, so peculiar are the conditions of the governed classes in Mexico that abstract laws cannot be applied by the Government."

"A government that does not listen to the

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voice of the governed," quickly rejoined Maximilian, "becomes corrupt and rushes to its own ruin. The best law is that of the acute judgment; but it is dangerous, because so few possess it, and there would only be a very few true judges, and only few justly judged people. Fairness, the daughter of Justice, wearies wickedness by its equanimity."

"The Church," said the priest, "in the absence of a highly organised judicial system, has endeavoured to act as an arbitrator of disputes, particularly those relating to land."

"Such an arrangement, however well intended, cannot be satisfactory for lack of authority. I mean to institute as soon as possible a more simplified system of justice than has yet been obtained. Much good must necessarily come from such reform; and I believe the time is now ripe for it. The man who sees and recognises the instinct of the nation will be supported by it; he who does not see it, and obstinately closes the door to it, is hopelessly lost!"

Father Fischer was an indulgent listener, and during the months that this journey consumed there were few phases of Maximilian's intentions and theories of government which did not come up for discussion, a discussion chiefly conducted *en route*, for whilst in town or city the Emperor's

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attention was directed to studying local conditions and forming new acquaintances. The impression which the incidents of the Imperial progress suggested—an impression received by Marshal Bazaine himself—was that the populace appeared to be highly organised under the rule of the Emperor. So skilfully had this false appearance been worked up that Maximilian not unnaturally formed the opinion that his reign had the unqualified approval of the people. Under the circumstances of his entrance into Mexico, it was impossible for him to obtain any other impression. It could not be said that he was self-deceived, or that he was an easy or willing subject for deception to be practised upon ; but the environment, from first to last, was so completely clerical that, broad as he supposed his vision and penetrating as he thought his investigation, all was mirage. The physical effort for such a journey as this can only be appreciated by those who have taken similar ones. The monotony of the great stages, over desert, and about the foot-hills, and through mountainous defiles, day after day, week after week, month after month, is wearing upon most of the qualities that go to make the character of the average man. Only one keen to the highest sense of duty, or spurred by the thought of great

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accomplishments, can escape unchanged from such fatigue.

Father Fischer was such a one, paradoxical as it may seem. Maximilian was such a one, for he felt that he was learning to know his people, and was confident that he would return to his capital more firmly seated on the throne than before, equipped with a wideness of experience, geographical and social, which must bear fruit and bring about needed reforms. The journey had not confined itself to the itinerary previously taken by Father Fischer. It was more nearly the reverse of that. Oaxaca had been the destination of the Emperor before he turned west; and from there he had actually made the extraordinary journey to the incomparable seaport of Acapulco. Thence, by long and laborious stages, north and east to Guadalajara.

It was here, after months of travel, that the first word reached him from Mexico city, and the news was such as to make the sternest of hearts quail. What the Emperor learned was not thrust upon him by a flying courier, or announced to him in stentorian voice by any over-zealous partisan. It was concealed from him for a time, till the surroundings were considered appropriate for him to learn of the downfall of his allies, the clergy.

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Maximilian had not been gone from his capital a week when the Empress Regent, with one sweep of the pen, had removed every minister of state from office and appointed an entirely new ministry, made up of the so-called party of opposition, really Liberals, who opposed the Empire and had always fought the growing power of the Church. The clericals in Mexico had speedily advised the Archbishop of the overthrow, but for one reason or another had taken no means of informing the Emperor. The Empress, so far as he had learned, undertook to inform her husband of her action and the immediate results of it while he should be at Acapulco. Whether this courier was waylaid by bandits, or, as it was supposed, by emissaries of the clergy, it has never been fully known. Whether Father Fischer knew of the great change before Maximilian is likewise merely a theory.

The city of Guadalajara is one of the finest in Mexico. Its broad streets and fine Alameda, surrounded by buildings of good architectural appearance, lend it a dignity and excellence which is absent from many of the more picturesque places. The tone of the inhabitants, even that of the Indians in their physical appearance and habits and dress, betokens higher intelligence, robuster health and greater general prosperity

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than are to be noted elsewhere. A finer degree of stability consequently results, both as regards political ideas and commercial enterprise, which characterises the entire community. Here, too, the Church is particularly prosperous; the style and accommodation of its buildings excellent and ample for all purposes. The greatest care had been taken to show the spirit prevailing in favour of the Emperor; and the greatest response of a spontaneous nature had been met.

As the effect of the action of the Empress as Regent could only be surmised, it was deemed expedient, after much consultation, to keep from the Emperor all knowledge of that *coup d'état*, so far as possible, till after his welcome and public reception had been fully carried out. By well-laid plans he was brought in contact only with men of the strictest party principles, whose instructions had been ample for the formation of a hedge, to keep the fiction fully screened. Realising that his journey was homeward from this point, and fully appreciating the great good feeling that prevailed amidst a populace of striking appearance, Maximilian threw himself with the uttermost heartiness into all the arrangements of the fête, which continued for two days. Nothing occurred to interrupt the ceremonies, and, without exception, they were

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more encouraging to the success and maintenance of the new era than anything that had been seen before.

After the conclusion of the public services of the second day the royal party sought the retirement of the Bishop's palace for rest, prior to the great banquet that was to be given to Maximilian that night. Although he had asked for news of the Empress and of state upon reaching the city, he had been, in one way and another, put off by statements to the effect that certain dispatches had, by mistake, been returned to Mexico; and so continual were his duties that opportunities were lacking for pressing the matter. He had, however, been but a short time alone when the aide-de-camp of Marshal Bazaine was announced. The Emperor bade him be shown in at once and greeted him with marked cordiality, inquiring earnestly first of the Empress and then of Bazaine.

The aide-de-camp responded lightly regarding Marshal Bazaine's health, and assured his Majesty that the Empress was well and happy.

"I bear," he said, "a verbal message from Marshal Bazaine, which he desired me to place before your Majesty at the earliest possible moment, because he is now quite certain that your Majesty is unaware of the change of

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administration that has been wrought by the Regent in its bearing upon the State."

Maximilian listened intently, unaware of the nature of the revelation that was to follow. Without the least change of facial expression, or the utterance of an exclamation, he heard of the changes wrought by his Empress under the Regency. In a word, it was the complete undoing of the clerical party and the placing in power of the Liberalists, who had unceasingly opposed the establishment of the Empire. It was, under the circumstances, the best method of learning of so great a change. The officer who informed him was a foreigner, representing the commander of an army of occupation, as nearly as possible a neutral authority, whose opinion, whether solicited or not, was a matter of no importance. The awkwardness of the Emperor's position was at once apparent to him. For months he had been absent, chiefly in closest intimacy with the leaders of the party that had been instrumental in placing him upon the throne. He had been making an important journey of state, familiarising himself with the conditions of the nation and the resources of the country. The feeling had grown upon him that the party in power was justly in possession of it, and that it could be induced to bring about

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the needful reforms he intended ; that that party was popular with the masses ; and that his reign was acceptable to them. How groundlessly were these feelings placed we have plainly seen. Nevertheless, Maximilian regarded them as well established.

On the other hand, his wife, by him made the Regent of the Empire, had overthrown that party for causes which he could then only surmise. There was, in his opinion, nothing to be done. To repudiate immediately the action of the Regent would have only made matters worse. Maximilian was a man of action, and also a man capable of calm consideration of great affairs. His first impulse was to start at once for the capital, without waiting for the completion of the programme of Guadalahara. His second thought was to consult with his now well-tried friends, as he believed them to be. Anyhow, he would stay the night, attend the banquet, and, if occasion offered, prepare the way for a quiet discussion of the policy to be followed, starting in the morning on his return journey. The idea that the clergy had kept the news from him never crossed his mind.

The dinner at the Archbishop's passed off with no unusual event to distinguish it. It was

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of local import, and the chief guests, beside the Emperor and his suite, were the Governor of the state and the local officials of the district. Upon rising from the table Maximilian asked for Father Fischer, whose absence from the board he had already noted ; he was informed that the priest that evening, upon receiving word from Puebla (the first that he had had since leaving), found it imperative to proceed thither forthwith, and had consequently left that night. It had been the Emperor's purpose to talk with him about the new course of events. All other persons and officials at Guadalahara were strangers to him.

At the first convenient moment he signified his desire to retire, and at once withdrew to his apartments. The same aide-de-camp of Marshal Bazaine awaited him there for orders, and made an informal report upon the military situation throughout the country. The Emperor listened attentively for a time, studying a map all the while, which he had spread before him upon the table. Then with a few words of thanks he dismissed all who were with him.

After a few turns up and down the apartment, he sat for a time thoughtfully before the table upon which the map of Mexico still remained unfolded. A half-dozen candles were upon one

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corner of it, all in one bronze candelabrum. The other portions of the room, plain in itself, like all the chapter-houses and monasteries of the day, were in complete darkness. The monarch as he sat in that great bank of night, with the massive walls and high ceilings quite invisible, the soft light of the candles illuminating not only the white, unscratched page of paper before him, but also touching with a covering kindness the fine, silk-like, blond locks of hair upon his head, would have made an attractive study for a great portrait painter—the refined, aristocratic and well-defined features of the man's face, the calm, thoughtful expression of the eyes, the firm mouth, the lithe, graceful and well-proportioned figure noticeable even when in a sitting posture. The finely tapered hand grasped the pen. He began to write. Was it to his Empress that he was inditing a few words of confidence? Or was it to the Emperor of France that he was sending greetings of the satisfactory state of affairs which the French army had brought about? Or was it to Bazaine, the practical Marshal in the field? No, it was to none of these. Let us approach him softly from behind and glance over his shoulder. Are we trespassing? No. To-morrow all the world will know it. The man is writing his death decree. It is the

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Bando Negro Proclamation of the Emperor Maximilian, issued 3rd October 1865 :

"MEXICANS : The cause sustained by Don Benito Juarez, with so much valour and constancy, has already succumbed, not only before the national will, but also before the very law invoked by him in support of his claims. To-day, this cause, having degenerated into a faction, is abandoned by the fact of the removal of its leaders from the country's territory.

"The National Government has long been indulgent and has lavished its clemency. The desired result has been obtained. Men of honour have rallied under the flag, and have accepted the just and liberal principles that guide its policy. Disorder is now only kept up by a few leaders swayed by their unpatriotic passions, and by demoralised individuals unable to rise to the height of political principle, and by an unruly soldiery, such as ever remains the last and sad vestige of civil wars.

"Henceforth, the struggle must be between the honourable men of the nation and the bands of brigands and evil-doers. The time for indulgence has gone by.

"The Government, strong in its power, will henceforth be inflexible in meting out punishment,

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when the laws of civilisation, humanity or morality demand it.

“All individuals forming a part of the armed bands, or bodies, existing without legal authority, whether or not proclaiming a political pretext, shall be judged militarily by the courts martial. If found guilty, even though only of the fact of belonging to an armed band, they shall be condemned to capital punishment, and sentence shall be executed within twenty-four hours.

“The pain of death shall be pronounced against offenders, even if only found guilty of belonging to an armed band.

“Immunity will be granted only to those coerced into the ranks.

“Those who voluntarily procure money or any other succour to guerrilleros shall be punished by death; also those who have given such armed forces advice, news, or counsel, or who have sold to them arms, horses or ammunition, provisions, or any material of war.”

Then followed a sweeping compulsory decree for all persons, Mexican citizens, to act in the defence in behalf of their monarch.

“Sentence of death passed upon those guilty of the offences enumerated by the present law shall

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be executed within the time fixed, and the benefit of appeal for mercy shall be refused to the condemned."

If Maximilian had been content to await issuance of the foregoing Black Decree until he had shown it to the practical Marshal Bazaine, or even to his ministers of state, it is possible that it could have been so modified as to have caused less consternation and hatred amongst those against whom it was aimed. But the Emperor was alone, harassed on the one side by the thought of the ill-advised overthrow of his ministers, and cheered on the other by the assurances then received of the complete routing of his principal opponents in the field. The decree was ordered to be proclaimed and issued at once, and the Emperor without further delay started for his capital.

Nearly a week elapsed before Maximilian reached the city of Mexico. His dispatches from Guadalahara had been so sudden as to preclude all chance of word being sent to the Government in advance of his arrival. Hence there was no reception or gathering to welcome him back; and unostentatiously and silently he entered the only city throughout the length and breadth of the land that actually was loyal to

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his reign. Coming thus unheralded to his capital, the Emperor was all the more desirous of investigating both the causes and effects of the *coup d'état* of the Regency than he would have been if it were known that he had returned to make trouble. His greeting with the Empress was most cordial and affectionate, without trace of censure. He had decided to remain passive, for a few days at least, and to make his observations and strictures slowly. In this attitude he had remained for two days, apparently enjoying a well-earned rest, when the immediate attendants at Court noticed a marked change in the Emperor's appearance; an anxious and pained expression spread over his countenance. For the first time in their acquaintance with him, he bore a distinctly depressed air; they feared, consequently, that he had been attacked by some malignant illness.

Towards evening he withdrew to the great loggia facing the south, and, summoning the Empress and Marshal Bazaine, he dismissed all the others. As he embraced his wife, she drew back in a startled manner, saying:

“ My dear Max, what has happened? You are ashen! ”

Bazaine, who entered at that instant, ejaculated a similar expression; and the three stood silently

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looking at each other. The Emperor was the first to break the stillness.

"I am, physically, quite well," he said at last, slowly and distinctly—"quite well." Then he faltered. The Empress, fancying he was about to reprove them for the great changes she had wrought in his absence, stepped forward, with a pleading, appealing look in her eyes, as if to strike an attitude of seeking for mercy, when the Emperor stayed her hand. "Neither of you can fancy the indignity that has come upon us," he at length pronounced. "The Emperor Napoleon of France has played false to his promises! See," he said, his face for an instant resuming its usual courageous expression, "here is a dastardly letter from him." The Marshal grew pallid and winced at this. "I have been tricked by a Bonaparte," he went on to say. "It appears that Mr Seward, the Secretary of State for the United States, has informed the Marquis de Marthalon that the French troops must be withdrawn forthwith from Mexico, maintaining that there is no proof of the Mexicans having called me to the throne. Napoleon quotes this dispatch in his perfunctory epistle to me. In the most supercilious manner he informs me that it is no longer desirable to keep his forces in Mexico, as no good result can follow

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therefrom; and furthermore, he goes on to say that he has sent ships to Vera Cruz, to act as our convoy to France, whither he advises our immediate departure. The tone of the epistle is distinguished by much hauteur, coupled, as I have said, with superciliousness; but the closing paragraph leaves no room for thinking that the French army will remain here longer than it will take for the transports to reach Vera Cruz. I have been tricked!" he exclaimed, turning sharply upon the Marshal and advancing threateningly.

Bazaine met his advance sternly but respectfully. "It is clear to me, your Majesty, that my Emperor has not taken this sudden step without compulsion of some kind, and that he has adopted this manner of addressing his compulsion to your Majesty to cloak his chagrin. It is impossible for him voluntarily to change his attitude of enthusiastic support to your Empire, which he considers the conception of his reign. But the conditions prevailing on the Continent prohibit a larger force being sent to Mexico either now or in the future."

"Nobody requests that more foreign troops be sent here," interrupted the Emperor. But the Marshal apparently heard him not.

"The French Empire must always remain

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the great military power of Europe. I have repeatedly warned your Majesty that the Mexicans are not reconciled to this Empire, and that for the past two years they have left no stone unturned to influence the United States to enforce the Monroe doctrine against your Majesty's government. That which you now repeat from the letter of the Emperor of France, relative to the action of Mr Seward, but serves to confirm me in this belief. I know it; and I believe that Napoleon feels that he cannot risk a conflict with that Power, now of great military strength and experience. I doubt if with his entire military power he could successfully cope with it on this side of the ocean. And to withdraw more troops from France at this time would mean that he would expose his empire to foreign invasion. I believe the French people think themselves to be more powerful and efficient, from a military standpoint, than they actually are. The actual condition is not shown by the budgets of the past three years. Much of the expenditure has been incurred by the corps here in Mexico, and the efficiency of our army at home is more apparent than real. It is not a naval power we have to confront in Europe, but a land power of no common order."

The Marshal spoke with great lucidity, dis-

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tinctly and with marked emphasis of manner. Maximilian heard him through, with marked disapproval in his manner. It was now, as it had ever been, impossible for him to grasp—even to admit to himself—the strength of the American Republic. It was, as it were, a lost sense. The man had clear ideas on many, indeed on most, subjects. He had wide knowledge of ancient and contemporary history, was adequately informed upon the governments and armaments of the European states and powers, but he had never grasped the character, or meaning, or power of the great Republic of the North. Even now, in the presence of one who had made a study of American institutions, and was versed in the greatest of wars of modern times, just ended, his mind refused to admit its power, or its right in this matter; and in his attitude towards it failed to change from the feeling of prejudice against what he still termed the parvenu Republic of the West.

Marshal Bazaine had no intention of arguing the matter with the sovereign of Mexico. He did not feel called upon to defend the conduct of his own Emperor further than he had already done. Those emperors were equals. He wished, as between man and man, to establish a complete understanding of facts and international condi-

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tions, as he comprehended them from his position of experience, observation and study, and this he considered he had done. He believed Mr Seward was right when he said that there was "no proof of the Mexicans having called Maximilian to the throne." There was proof that the clerical party had endeavoured to make it appear that the people had called Maximilian to rule over them, and he had done all that was in his power to so direct the Emperor's thought and investigation. But Maximilian was, from first to last, within the orb of the clerical party itself, and from the time of the Treaty of Miramar until now the network of its designs had been continually, directly or indirectly, woven about him with consummate skill. Bazaine finally took occasion to say that he had thus far received no orders from his Government relating to the withdrawal of his army.

The Empress had remained at her husband's side, silent throughout, her powerful, serene reserve of manner having been of great assistance to the Emperor. As Bazaine finally closed his remarks, and with the utmost dignity and austerity made his adieu, the royal couple, left alone in that vast loggia, amidst the tropical palms and under that magnificent clear sky, turned to the balustrade and, hand in hand, stood

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for a few minutes gazing far away upon that incomparable landscape which the rays of the great setting sun revealed, with Popocatepetl in the background. Their thoughts were far beyond the lofty peak; the mind of each turned once more to Miramar and the matchless Adriatic, their home and still their hope.

Charlotta was the first to break the spell.

"My dear Max," she said quickly, "this outcome of our affairs is impossible. The French troops must not be withdrawn. We cannot allow all our work here to be undone, without an effort—a final effort."

Maximilian looked at her inquiringly and remained silent.

"I will go at once," she continued earnestly, "and visit France, for the purpose of persuading the Emperor Napoleon to maintain his forces here. I am sufficiently conversant with the treaties of London and Miramar, and the subsequent secret agreement, to discuss the matter intelligently; and as you cannot go yourself, I will."

For a few moments Maximilian made no reply, then, taking her gently by the hand, he kissed her upon the lips and said: "That is a very loyal little woman! But the undertaking is too vast, too frightfully pathetic, too remote, for you

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alone. I cannot go. I am bound to remain here; and yet your scheme seems feasible, once you are in France. I think of you, though," he said, once again grasping her hand; "I think of the long, tumultuous ocean voyage you must make without me, and the lack of support which I alone could lend you in the long hours of great trial." He spoke calmly, with an air of great anxiety upon him.

"It is so vast an undertaking," said Charlotta, "that physical danger or discomfort scarcely enters into the matter. If it be once conceded a desirable thing to do, its vastness, its pathos, its remoteness, are factors that are each and all unimportant. The French Government has entered into a solemn compact to do for us certain things here, and it now, in a most supercilious manner, without justifiable cause, threatens to abrogate that agreement. The circumstances which it pleads as a reason for abandoning us are such as should lead it rather to the strengthening of our forces here. Consequently, our cause needs, and must receive, our personal intervention at the Court of Napoleon. I have, dear Max, made up my mind to this, and I shall not be swerved from it."

Her attitude towards the subject, as well as her treatment of it, was thoroughly masculine. The

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pupils of her eyes had dilated; her manner, though outwardly calm, bore evidence of suppressed determination. All her interests were centred in the mission. He who understood her so well and had watched her ever-increasing interest in their realm now gazed critically at her.

"To-morrow will soon be here, there is no need of haste in the decision. Haste is inadvisable anyway, and under existing circumstances impossible, inasmuch as there is no ship at Vera Cruz that would convey you thither. My much-desired navy is as remote as ever. I once had dreams of making Mexico a maritime power! How little I understood then the character of its people! To make of them either a nation of merchants or of naval strength is a task of inconceivable difficulty." He arose abruptly. "It is an impossible task," he said forcefully. "These people, though far from being savages, have the limitations of savagery, so far as progress and political advancements go."

He ceased speaking again, and walking to his wife's side took her gently by the arm and conducted her within.

And things in Mexico would never again be the same. The acts of the Regent had alarmed the clerical party. The intention of Napoleon to withdraw his troops from Mexican soil was soon

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known publicly, and the growing necessity for a force to maintain at least the dignity of the Empire demanded an effective showing of arms. What had promised from afar to be an agreeable occupation and life-work now appeared to the monarchs as one of stern duty, only supported by pride. The fore part of their reign had been enjoyable, though never quite free from the feeling on the Emperor's part that things were not quite right. The sense of permanent security and success had never together presented themselves to his mind, which was a practical one of more than ordinary capability. Maximilian always felt in a sense confronted by an insurmountable difficulty—but a difficulty which, if insurmountable, he had nevertheless hoped that he might in some fairly satisfactory manner get round. There was never a period when his confidence in Marshal Bazaine had weakened; but the time had now come when he no longer confided freely in him. Bazaine, too forcefully for the Emperor's peace of mind, dwelt upon and insisted upon the coming of the Government of the United States as a power in Mexican affairs, and its insistence on the application of the Monroe doctrine to Maximilian's Empire.

In his hasty determination that the Empress should return to Europe, to visit both the French

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Emperor and the Pope of Rome, Bazaine was not consulted. He was naturally aware of the proposed visit, but he kept his own counsel, proffering no advice. He had received no direct intimation from his sovereign of the intended withdrawal of the French forces; so that he maintained the same activity in the field that had marked his previous career. There had never been any complaint of his zeal, nor of his intelligence, nor yet of his practical accomplishment. For a time, immediately following the Emperor's return to his capital, a spell seemed to be upon his enemies.

It was this apparent subjection, occurring simultaneously with the news of the French withdrawal, that made it the harder for the Emperor to be reconciled to the abandonment of the undertaking. Chapultepec was finished—a grand palace upon a grand and historical height—a fitting home for a monarch of a great nation. From its terraces on every side the expanding fields of the plateau of the valley of Mexico stretched far away to the foot-hills of the encircling mountains; near at hand the grove of cedars cast their shade on dell and stream, and raised their splendid tops half-way up the hill-sides. Within, all was spacious comfort and suitable elegance. The brilliance of a thousand

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candelabra, the elegant parquet floors and the soft, beautiful fabrics, all lent their effect to rooms of fine proportions. The most attractive feature of the palace was the hanging gardens, upon which all the public rooms, as well as the *salle à manger*, opened. Already the flowers were blooming here, as if the gardens had been of long duration. It was here that on the eve of her departure for Europe Charlotta held her last reception. It was also the first reception given in the palace, for the Emperor had insisted that the Empress should not leave till the palace had been formally opened. There was a gathering there that night the most noteworthy of any of their reign ; and the interest that all took in the new structure was only heightened by the pleasure that all seized for the time being in the dance and promenade.

It was generally known that the Empress was to depart at once for Vera Cruz. But little was known of her mission beyond the fact that she was going to visit the Emperor's and her own family in Europe. All the foreign and domestic members of the Court were there, all the staff of Bazaine, and the Marshal himself and his Mexican bride. All were gay and cheerful and secure in their surroundings.

XI

THE Empress of Mexico arrived at Havre, after five thousand miles of ocean voyage, in the early part of the year. She disembarked towards evening, with her few attendants and Mexican servants, the latter clad in their national costume, wearing the customary sombreros distinctive of their nationality. These alone attracted attention, her Majesty's arrival having been unheralded and entirely unostentatious. Her appearance was that of a woman in mourning for a near relative. The party departed for Paris as soon as possible, and arriving there immediately repaired to the Grand Hotel, then the most celebrated of Parisian hostellries.

There, after twenty-four hours' calm rest, she dispatched her equerry to the Tuileries to open communication with the Emperor of France. Word soon came back that the Court was at Saint Cloud; and forthwith the message was sent thither that the Empress of Mexico was in Paris, desirous of seeing Napoleon upon diplomatic business. Whether or not the Emperor was already aware of the arrival of the Empress in France will never be known. It is of historical

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record, however, that his answer was one that put an end to all hope of an immediate interview, for the bearer of the missive returned with a message which, while expressing Napoleon's eminent satisfaction upon learning that the Empress of Mexico had sought the hospitable shores of France, he informed her that he regretted that his health was such as to preclude him from either entertaining, or even receiving, anyone even upon the most delicate of diplomatic business. The Empress read the note herself with lightning-like rapidity, maintaining her accustomed deportment of outward calmness. As she finished, she folded the note and replaced it in the envelope; then, rising from her chair, she walked to the window, looked out upon the Place de l'Opéra, and remarked that it was rather a dismal day for a long drive. Her attendants did not quite catch her idea. She was very uncommunicative.

She then commanded her carriage to be in readiness immediately at the end of *déjeuner*, and told an attendant to be in readiness to accompany her. Shortly after noon she entered her brougham, having directed the footman to proceed to Saint Cloud. There, entirely unannounced, she entered the waiting-room of the palace, and, telling the concierge who she

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was, said she had come for an interview with the Emperor. The man, knowing the reported condition of his master, after a look of astonishment, recovered his composure in the face of the royal personage, supposing that by some oversight he had not been informed of her appointment, and was proceeding to execute her commands when the Empress, eagerly following him, bade him report that her business was imperative and her time limited. This extraordinary message was delivered much as it was given, simply because it was so informal and unusual.

At the time Napoleon was sitting in a large room whose windows overlooked, to the west and south, the most striking of river scenery in the vicinity of Paris, but so inclement was the weather that his chair was close to a great fire which was burning brightly upon the hearth, his arm resting upon a large table upon which were spread maps and documents. At the sound of approaching footsteps the Emperor looked up, his face expressing vexation. He was about to state that he had given orders to be left entirely alone when, noticing the peculiar expression upon the attendant's face, he exclaimed : "What is the matter?"

"The Empress Charlotta of Mexico," replied

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the attendant, "is in the anteroom, and says she has an appointment with your Majesty at this hour."

"An appointment with me!" exclaimed the Emperor, endeavouring to arise. Two books fell upon the floor from his lap as he did so, and as he dropped back, half reaching for them, two attendants dashed forward to assist him. There was a sudden rustle of a woman's skirts, and as they straightened up they turned to confront the Empress of Mexico beside the sovereign of France! She had actually forced a passage, and stood unattended in the monarch's presence. Napoleon had arisen with noticeable pain. In loose-fitting garments, he stood his full height for a moment, without sign of advancing or of cordial reception. The face that previously had worn the ashen-grey complexion which was so noticeable afterward at Sedan lost even that degree of colour, and was now the pallor of death, the eyes alone retaining a resemblance to life.

The attendants had withdrawn even before the Emperor uttered his first words. The man, always self-possessed and dignified, now doubly so from surprise and anger, made quite sure that no one else but the woman before him was within hearing of his voice before

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he trusted himself to speak. Then, as if in one breath, he said :

"Madam, this interruption is absolutely unpardonable."

"Sir," replied the Empress, equally calm, "your denial of me this morning was equally inexplicable. The accounts balance, if weighed in the scale of social relations. It was impossible for me to await your Majesty's will in regard to an interview. My errand could not be delayed. If it had been your Majesty's death-bed, it would have been my duty to have reached it. I trust, however, that your Majesty's health is only temporarily impaired, both for your own sake and ours, for we have much to demand of you."

All this had been delivered standing. Napoleon had neither extended a hand nor made a motion for the Empress to be seated. He remained standing close by the fire, his right hand upon the table, supporting and balancing himself. The ashen colour was restored to his cheeks. It is difficult to say which was the more unearthly hue. That the man was ill nobody could deny, though, as the Empress of Mexico told him, her business was of such moment that she must have sought an audience even in the presence of death. A nation's life was at stake.

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After a feeble attempt to speak, the Emperor, regaining his customary voice, said :

"Madam, there is no business so important that the privacy of the French Emperor can be invaded."

"Your Majesty, then, is unaware," replied the Empress sharply, "that not only is the honour of France at stake, but that the integrity—the personal integrity—of Louis Napoleon, third Bonaparte, Emperor of France, is impeached; and it is my mission here to prevent that impeachment from becoming public and disgraceful to him!"

The bearing of the woman, her mien, her manner and her method were alike masculine, and those of a masculine advocate at that. The man's vanity and curiosity were alike piqued simultaneously; his interest was aroused and his aggressive irritability quieted and disarmed. The moment he gave evidence of interest he admitted the right of audience. The weakness from which he suffered caused him to sink back into his chair, but he rose again at once; though willing to discuss the intrusion, he was unable to allow any extension of hospitality. Charlotta noticed the withholding of the ordinary civilities without resenting it. Her errand admitted of no petty resentments. She was the

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first to resume ; but as she did so a new phase of Napoleon's attitude towards Mexico dawned upon her : that of weariness of the affair. Her intuition indicated this to her, and stung her pride and resourcefulness to the fullest.

"I suppose your Majesty is aware of the object of my visit to Europe ? I came at once upon receipt by Maximilian of your Majesty's letter announcing the intended withdrawal of the French army of occupation from Mexican soil. Your Majesty must certainly be aware that you are a partner, with Maximilian and myself, in this undertaking, and that such a withdrawal of the support of the French arm to the new Empire of Mexico is not only fatal to its success, but will fix for ever the stigma of treachery upon your Majesty. By the Treaty of Miramar, and the subsequent secret agreement, your Majesty both suggested and promised national as well as personal support to the establishment of the Mexican Empire. Moral support is often as important as military, and it is apparent that your Majesty intends to withdraw even that."

The Emperor visibly staggered, but the Empress gave no sign of assistance. She stood proudly erect before him and continued :

"For three years Maximilian has slaved

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himself to fulfil the conception of your Majesty's reign ; for three years his work has, by scientific and social progress, with God's help, gradually advanced a people from degradation to a conscious form of government and life. All has been homogeneous advancement. The power of the sword has been tempered by the sacrament of Christ ; the work of education, the establishment of justice, the equalisation of civic rights and liberty have all been called upon to bring about the fruition of the work. Now, just as the establishment of a coherent and enlightened and self-sustaining government is about to be perfected, your Majesty ruthlessly proposes to withdraw the French army, which alone has made possible the recent blessings that have come upon Mexico. For the first time in half-a-century peace, permanent peace, prevails throughout the length and breadth of that vast land ; and at the moment of its consummation, while the divine love of Christ is settling upon it, the word is passed that Louis Napoleon withdraws his support. For what reason is this ? "

The woman knew the reason full well ; she also knew that the Emperor would give her a false reason, and with that before her she would spring upon him with talons of steel.

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"Madam," replied the Emperor at once, upon the first opportunity to speak, "the letter which your Majesty refers to relates to the withdrawal of only such troops of the French army as can now be spared—only such as can be spared—but, fortunately, most of them can be spared. The great work of Maximilian, to which your Majesty refers, is well-nigh accomplished; and so efficiently has it been done, so radically has the military effaced brigandage and hated Republicanism that the withdrawal of the arm of France, instead of being premature, is really a most desirable occurrence at this time. Besides, the French people desire their army here."

The Emperor slightly changed his attitude, taking a step forward, and then, with wavering backward step, sank heavily into his chair. Already the mark of death was upon him; and the malady which the sad days of Sedan heightened, and which matured later at Chislehurst, was manifest. But the Empress was oblivious. If the death of an Emperor was before her, the death of an Empire was before both of them.

"You lie," she exclaimed deliberately and loudly, as the Emperor gazed up at her. She had reoccupied her place, while the Emperor assumed his previous attitude at the table. He

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reached out his long, richly jewelled hand, but was speechless with astonishment. "The reasons you have stated are false as hell," said the infuriated woman. "You, an Emperor, you, the claimant of the throne of the Cæsars, you, the nephew of Napoleon the Great, feigning to be the military dictator of modern Europe, retiring your forces in Mexico before the threats of the tamed and shattered democracy of the United States of America! Because they would make the Monroe doctrine apply to Maximilian's Empire, as a lying-in doctor would make a poultice apply now to yourself. You, who have caused the Republic of France to become the Empire of France, now weaken before the parvenu Republic of the West, and obey, servilely obey, a written mandate of a State secretary! What right have you to occupy a throne? What means have you to explain the conduct of a weakling to your peers?"

So rapid was the woman's utterance, and so unexpected the personal attack, that the Emperor, enfeebled by the illness from which he suffered, and surprised by the remarkable attack upon his most private characteristics, sat silent.

"There may be reasons for your traitorous conduct," continued the woman, "reasons that I

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am unaware of, in addition to those that I am familiar with, but those you have given are not the ones that have led you to your action. You are, to my certain knowledge, actuated by fear—a fear that is cowardice. Instead of standing with us for a monarchical form of government, you weakly surrender, so that another republic may arise to feed on the entrails of itself—a republic which, like the silkworm, whilst she seems to play, consumes her own bowels. We know that you hate Republicanism. It is, therefore, because we are Bourbons that you seek to heap vexation upon us and ignominy upon our conduct—you, the parvenu monarch of a throne of your own creation, you, the offspring of debauchery and crime, you, the spurned of all royal houses!" She walked rapidly backward and forward in front of the still half-reclining monarch, whose attitude resembled one who crouched before a crazed wild beast. It would be difficult to imagine anything more wild and savagely angry than this usually cold, calm woman of royal birth. Few human passions are equal in ferocity, hatred and malice, to the outraged feelings revolting at treachery in high places. All semblance of royalty had departed from the manner of each sovereign. Napoleon raised himself to his feet with evident labour

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and suffering, and once more steadyng himself against the table, exclaimed :

"Madam! You wrong—you outrage me! I am actuated in my resolves by motives the most honourable, for your own, your husband's and your country's good. The time has come when it is apparent to me, informed as I am through many channels, on this and the other side of the ocean, that the errand upon which you and your husband set forth is finished. My Marshal, as well as special envoys, all send me one report. Great as have been Maximilian's diplomacy, intelligent action and genius for government, I am convinced that he has not been able to impose the monarchical form of government upon the Mexican people."

"What evidence," broke in the Empress, "have you to substantiate such a statement?"

"The total absence of revenue," replied the Emperor, "after all these years of military protection. So great in fact is the deficit, compared with the amount which the Treaty of Miramar provided to be collected by way of revenue from Mexico, that means have had to be found for making it appear that the money from the exchequer of France has been expended upon the army at home. I fear my own people consider their army too efficient, and become

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over-confident in their attitude towards our neighbour to the north."

"That is a specious argument," sneered the Empress, who, as the Emperor had arisen, had remained in the attitude of one about to spring upon the throat of an assailant, "an argument such as any ordinary commercial coward might use."

Her words came slow, with great distinctness, aimed at the heart, marked by contempt and loathing, which the man was not only intended to feel, but actually did feel. The personal insult, so long continued, was too great for further forbearance. He stepped quickly across the room to the end of the mantel, keeping his eye rigidly upon the woman all the while, and gave a sharp, quick pull on the bell-rope. Instantly two servants appeared, and as they did so the Emperor, who now had partly recovered his composure, bowing gracefully to the Empress of Mexico, said :

"Madam, by what route will you leave France?"

She, with equal restraint, replied hastily :

"Sire, I go to-night to Rome."

XII

THE Emperor descended upon Mexico to find fresh arrivals from France there awaiting him. General Castlenau landed in Vera Cruz on a special mission from Napoleon, accompanied by the Comte de St Sauveur and the Marquis de Gallifet. They were strangers to the monarch, but properly accredited. Little time was lost in making known their specific errand. General Castlenau had imperative orders to send home at once the foreign legion, and all the French soldiers, or anyone else who wished to return to Europe, as well as to offer transportation to the Austrian and Belgian legions if they demanded it.

The Emperor summoned Bazaine, and after calmly hearing the ultimatum of the French Government, hastily replied that he would not go to Europe in the baggage wagon of the French army.

"The cabinet of the Tuilleries wishes to wash its hands of this affair at any price. Tell your Emperor I am not yet ready that he should."

From the peaceful repose of Cuernavaca to

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the turmoil of the capital was a tremendous transition. In the absence of the Empress, and in consideration of the condition of the treasury and the demands upon the public exchequer, the Emperor took up his abode at the Hacienda Tejo, just upon the outskirts of the city. It was here that he and Marshal Bazaine met for the last time. Neither was then aware that it was the termination of their personal acquaintance.

Since the first intimation of the withdrawal of the troops to France there had been something more than a coolness between the men. Bazaine had ever been a loyal officer of the French Emperor. Besides, his practical firmness in discussing affairs with Maximilian had at times grated on the latter. Now Maximilian saw the dawn of a new light. It was the light of a growing destruction to his hopes, his assumed life-work, his existence. He sent for Bazaine for such advice as that which, when freely given a few months before, had led him to reproach the Marshal. Whatever may be said of Bazaine, one cardinal trait was ever predominant—the extraordinary quality of veracity of intellect. Within the Patio Tejo the two met with unfeigned dignity. Both realised that the times were freighted with disaster. Maximilian realised

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that to escape it, on his part, a degree of madness was necessary.

"Your Majesty will pardon me for inquiring as to the Empress," said the soldier, bowing formally.

The Emperor paused before replying, and with a vacant air drew his hand across his forehead.

"I know," he said slowly at last, "very little direct or authentic news of her. That she reached Paris and left there immediately upon the close of the interview with Napoleon, I am well aware. That interview was stormy—nay, worse!—almost as violent as it were possible, without actual blows passing! The effect upon his Majesty, I have heard, was deleterious. The effect upon the Empress of Mexico I believe to have been worse than fatal. On her way to Rome her mind apparently gave way entirely, and to the present time no light has entered her intellect—she is a maniac!"

These words were spoken with the utmost reluctance. The pain they caused was clearly, deeply, shown upon the still handsome countenance of the Emperor, which strongly contrasted with the rough, plebeian type of the Marshal. The latter did not speak, but involuntarily reached forward and slightly grasped his master's hand. Then, purposely and abruptly changing

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the topic, he touched upon the military operations in which the Imperial Mexican forces were engaged in the north. From his report it appeared that very little, if any, well-maintained stand had been made. It was the same old story of non-resistance by the Republicans when the army advanced, and a great rising, as if springing up from the bowels of the earth, when the army had moved on.

It was the Emperor who finally checked this flow of conversation, and spoke of the coming of Castlenau and Dano. The object of their mission was so clearly known to each that little could be said thereupon. Maximilian used it as a stepping-stone to his real object in summoning Bazaine.

"What is your opinion, Marshal, of the future prospects of the monarchy?"

The question was concisely answered :

"Your Majesty will, upon the withdrawal of the foreign army, be entirely deprived of the chances of retreat. The Imperial forces cannot withstand the intrigue of Republicanism ; and even if they advance, the soldiers will be won over to the widespread national democracy. There will be danger without glory. From the moment the United States boldly pronounced their veto against the Imperial system, and

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insisted that the Monroe doctrine was being violated by the presence of a European army of occupation on this continent, your Majesty's throne was nothing better than a bubble!"

The expression was well and kindly tempered by a deferential tone of voice, but there was no mistaking the conviction of the speaker.

"Even if your Majesty had a hundred thousand French troops, I would still advocate an immediate and voluntary retirement."

"I put the greatest confidence in your opinion, Marshal," responded the Emperor. "I don't wish to appear like a soldier who throws away his musket and runs the faster from the field of battle."

He walked from the patio, where they had been conversing, towards the southern entrance of the house and looked vacantly out upon the wide-spreading valley. There was Chapultepec to the right, rising into prominence above the level of the plain, and then the hedgerows of eucalyptus of his own planting, indicating the course of the Paseo. The trees had made great growth. Then his eyes rested on the great snow-clad tops of the mountains to the south. Bazaine had approached him and was loath to let the vantage pass.

"It is an undeniable fact, your Majesty, that

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the Federal system is already re-established over the greater part of the territory. My opinion is that the population therein has very little disposition to support an Empire. A new army, even if your Majesty could raise one, would, as it progressed over the country, imbibe Republicanism. It is painfully evident to both of us that the Empire cannot maintain a financial system."

"Certainly not, when the French Government seizes our principal port of commerce," retorted the Emperor, with unusual severity.

Of this Bazaine took no notice, but continued :

"The Empire cannot maintain its authority from a military point of view; and furthermore, the people want a republic!"

"Do you realise," said Maximilian, with much impressiveness, "how much will be swallowed up in this shipwreck?—the regeneration of the Latin race, the hopes of the monarchy, the welfare of the Church of Rome, as well as the interests of the French claimants!"

Marshal Bazaine bowed low.

"All, your Majesty—all ruined in one great funeral pile. It is inevitable."

That night Maximilian decided to abdicate. So full was the air of the spirit of revolution that no time was to be lost. Only a small band of personal friends and followers were in the capital

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at the time. They were communicated with, and transportation was provided forthwith for themselves and their personal effects. Their retreat could barely be covered by the remaining French forces. Maximilian decided to leave Mexico, upon the grounds so wisely, simply and indisputably laid down by Marshal Bazaine. They were indisputably correct, and therefore it was the part of common sense to follow them ; they were simple, and therefore comprehensible to all concerned ; and to those not concerned the matter was of no consequence. They were wisely chosen, as they were the salient features of the whole unfortunate business.

It was perhaps, in comparison with the affairs of the entire earth, a tempest in a teapot ! But, then, all tempests are relatively insignificant—except to those in the boiling cauldron !

All the Emperor's personal effects were sent forward to the Austrian warship at Vera Cruz. Maximilian followed. The journey was toilsome, as usual, and ample opportunity was offered for reflection. It was dull, very dull ; solitary, very solitary. It was sad. The revolution weighed on the man's mind.

Only a little over three years before, with his handsome young wife by his side, he had gone over the same route to the capital, full of a

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curious hope that the destinies of a great people and of a dynasty of rulers were to be reunited under the banners of the Church of Rome, with all that prospect of success which sanction and wisdom and correct purpose, together with strong military support, could promise.

The party advanced to Orizaba, where the night was to be spent. Maximilian was driven, as usual, to the Bishop's palace, and after a brief visit there he informed his aides that he was going just outside the city to the Hacienda la Jalapilla, where he intended to spend the night alone. Once more the team was started ; and for a few moments Maximilian looked at them as they galloped through the main thoroughfare of the city, moving lightly and briskly even after their long journey. His mind recalled the fête where he had first seen them. They were the four white mules he had purchased from the bull ring. He was in a retrospective mood, and small things and incidents set greater thoughts on fire, as a slight fuse may ignite great subterranean mines. The team was soon at a halt at the entrance of Jalapilla. Upon alighting, Maximilian walked forward to inspect the mules, and complimenting their driver said, smiling : "They seem fit for the long journey before them." The muleteer was much flattered

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by the compliment, and cracking his whip went galloping to the corral.

Within, all necessary arrangements had been made for the comfort of the distinguished guest. Such habitations conform closely to the characteristics of the country, and though simple and plain in the extreme, barren of art and fine fabrics, are, nevertheless, amply provided with all that the traveller may require.

Once alone, the storm of introspection broke forth with renewed fury. It was doubtless the worst preparation that the Prince could have adopted for the events that followed, especially after such a sadly suggestive journey as he had that day accomplished. He was absolutely alone, not only during the evening meal, but also during the night. At first he sat by the large table, near the centre of the room, looking vacantly at a book in front of him, illuminated by the three candles that stood close together beside him. It was a book of prayer. If ever a man needed consolation and extraneous strength, this man did then. The tall, graceful figure rested easily on the common wooden chair, his right arm upon the table, his head upon his hand; the flaxen hair was yet neatly in place, and the customary elegance and grace of the man was apparent in his slightest movement.

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After a while he placed the book gently on the table, closed it and then, turning slightly, drew all the candles together and gazed intently into the thin flames. He was in an absent-minded state. Presently he arose and shook himself suddenly, as if a great shiver had passed through his body. Then the vacancy of expression passed, after a few steps backwards and forwards upon the tiled floor. The noise of his heavy travelling boots seemed to interfere with what was passing in the man's mind, or at least to jar upon it. After a few quick turns he went to the end of the room and removed them, placing soft felt slippers upon his feet, and then began to walk steadily to and fro again. One point his thoughts refused to pass—degraded, defeated and deserted, he was obliged to return to the scenes of his youth. He tried to picture to himself what would be his life if he went back to Austria and resumed the rank he had inherited; but the picture would not compose. The fact that he had renounced his right to the Austrian succession cut no figure in his thoughts, nor the further fact that his private fortune had all been swallowed up in the Mexican schemes he had aided and promoted. But the recollection of his boyish days and of his maturer life at home accentuated the sense of failure. He to whom

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success had been a duty was now homeward bound covered with failures. How could he face the most formal of all courts and report upon an errand thus disastrously ended when his departure had been marked with distinct disapproval by his family? Had he lived thoroughly up to the standard of *noblesse oblige*?

Suddenly his thoughts reverted and turned upon Mexico. For a moment he was bitter. The people for whom he had sacrificed so much—everything—had gone back on him and stung him with ingratitude; but this thought was only momentary. Maximilian fully grasped the Mexican character now. No one more fully realised the density and degradation of the masses there. His feeling of resentment towards them vanished even as it arose—poor, suffering people, deprived of the light of intelligence. And what of his immediate supporters—the representatives of the Church—had they fulfilled their part of the compact? Just as he was about to enter upon an analytical review of the situation his thoughts jumped violently to the further consideration of what his life would be in Austria—the life for one who had so recently received the divine call to rule. Again he was in the crypt of the Cathedral of Granada, again

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looking into the faces, the stone faces, of the recumbent figures of Ferdinand and Isabella. What mockery now was the metaphor of the puissant nation "arousing herself and shaking her invincible locks like a strong man after sleep." It was the wandering thought of one who had decided upon a sensible course of action at the cost of all that was noble and desirable. Hours passed unheeded. The most positive orders had been given to leave him alone till the hour of breakfast, when the journey was to be continued. But now a faint knock was heard at the door. The Prince started as if from slumber, groped across the barren room, and opening the door beheld his muleteer standing, lantern in hand. With many profuse apologies, he hastily informed Maximilian that when he went to the stables to give his animals an early breakfast to prepare them for the long journey he had found them gone. Startled by the discovery, he and his fellows had searched the neighbouring corrals without avail and had gone as far as Orizaba without obtaining news of them. Apparently a preconcerted theft had been made. Daylight was just coming in. Maximilian, who always knew how to act in the most disconcerting situations, merely commended the man for his zeal, remarking that further

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daylight might clear the matter up, and that he would soon be up and about. Returning to his rooms, a great shadow passed from off his countenance as he muttered :

“ It is the hand of fate upon me. I will remain in Mexico to the end ! ”

It was not a hasty resolution ; it was the result of the night’s contemplation. It was impossible for this man, this man of truth and breeding and high-mindedness, to run away from danger or duty. He fully realised that he had been duped by the clergy, maltreated by the people, deserted by Louis Napoleon. Yet he had cast his lot here. He had made political progress his aim ; his armies were still in the field, and the sober certainty of their defeat before him ; yet he would remain and with them fight it out to the end. His steps grew lighter, even elastic, as the day dawned. The unshaken resolution was in accordance with the character of the man. Quietly and unattended, he walked forth to meet the morning sun, with renewed hope—a hope born of despair ! As he passed from under the portico before the entrance of the patio he met Father Fischer, whom he had not seen for several months. They greeted each other like persons mutually surprised, with a sense of intrusion. Maximilian was the first to speak.

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He did so cordially and in the most friendly spirit. The priest, acknowledging the Emperor's complimentary salutations, replied by saying that he was unaware that his Majesty was at the Hacienda la Jalapilla, as word had been given out that the royal party had spent the night at Orizaba, preparatory to the descent to the sea.

"I had thought," continued the priest, "that I should never see your Majesty again. For months past my clerical duties have taken me far into the mountain regions in the north, and till my recent return to Orizaba I was unaware of the feeling that had come upon your Majesty, leading to the step which is now evident to all."

"A step known to myself only a few days ago, and one which I was led to take upon consultation with, and urgent advice from, the French Generals Bazaine and Castlenau, acting under the orders of Louis Napoleon."

"It is much to be regretted," replied the priest, in the most sympathetic tone, "that your Majesty had not at the time the valuable advice also of the Mexican Generals Miramon and Méjia, who last week arrived from Cuba at Vera Cruz, and are now at Orizaba on their way to Mexico. They are the most loyal of your Majesty's officers, whose experience in Mexican military matters renders them of great service."

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"I am surprised to learn of their return from exile," said the Emperor, "especially at such a time, when the conservative forces seemed to be disastrously defeated and unsupported by the foreign forces."

"Possibly they have been actuated," replied Father Fischer, still in a most contemplative attitude, "by the thought of dying with their soldiers in the last ditch, or else they have been led to the belief that there is yet a fighting chance for the Monarchy, and the restoration, by their efforts, of the Church property to its proper owners."

"It is hardly possible," said Maximilian, in his most courteous manner, "that any well-informed man could for a moment now believe that the latter is practical. There is much in what you say of standing by the forces now in the field and seeing the movement of the Royalists out to the last. From a military and political standpoint it is an impractical one; from the standpoint of assistance to the Church or clergy it is an equally ruinous movement; but from a strictly ethical standpoint it is clearly the course that duty points to us all. In moments when a man is abandoned by everybody, when there is no help, and no means of escape for the tortured mind, then the soul is capable of accomplishing

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its greatest achievements. It steps out of the human sphere and makes its way to victory, which under other circumstances would have been impossible. It is good from the beginning to look forward to a great future—still better, inheriting a great past, to realise the dreams of a glorious future. But it is terrible for a man who is conscious of a great past to feel that there is no future for him."

Maximilian uttered this in sadness, not bitterness. The priest had turned partly about and was looking towards the magnificent snow-clad peak of Orizaba, bathed in the rays of the rising sun.

"Mexico," he said, with unchanged gaze, "offers great opportunity for a ruler, if, as your Majesty has heretofore maintained, the intelligence of the people has to be raised and the voice of the people heard in their own behalf."

"The great crowd of people," retorted the impassioned Emperor, "has an intelligence beyond instinct, which is always correct. Peace and blessing are the gifts of a ruler who directs the instinct towards gradual development. If the instinct is used in a systematic way, to satisfy the momentary political situation, the natural result is a terrible revolution. To be able to recognise the instinct, and to lead it,

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is a talent only given to few. Heretofore I thought—at one time I thought—I had that talent, or an ordinary degree of it, coupled with industry and capacity for enlightened work, but I realise now that I haven't it, that my errand here was ill-considered—considered upon scanty information, and undertaken without a sufficient guarantee of applied military force and occupation. But that is of the past, Father Fischer. This night that we have just passed has been one of the most tumultuous of my life. Conviction upon conviction has come to my mind of the futility of my mission here; but with it has come the further conviction that abdication and retreat, for me at least, is impossible. I have determined to see it through to the end. We will not supplicate God for favour upon our undertaking. We will humbly thank Him for His infinite kindness to us in the past. The clear light of our intelligence is sufficient for us in our new resolve. Holy Father," he said, advancing and taking both the priest's hands in his, "go now, I would be alone for the entire morning. You alone now know of my resolve. Go to Orizaba, to the palace, and tell Bishop Labastida that I have decided to return to Mexico, and thence to proceed north as rapidly as possible, to join the royal army. Tell him my resolve is fixed; that I have

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preferred that this decision should be announced through the medium of the head of the Church, which has been my one constant ally since I came to this country."

With this resolve Maximilian re-entered the *hacienda*, and having ordered a scanty repast sat down to indite several letters. The first was to Marshal Bazaine, in which he thanked him for what he termed the many distinguished services he had rendered the Royalist cause, briefly but plainly informing him of his resolve. The second was to General Castlenau, whom he now recognised as the chief representative of the French nation in Mexico. The note was a brief setting forth of the Emperor's resolve, terse, trite and extremely cold, without accusations. The third was longer and more involved. It was to M. Droyan de Thuys, Maximilian's trusted friend in France. In it the Emperor first announced his resolve to stay, and perish, if need be, in Mexico. Then he set forth the causes of his unfortunate position, laying the prime cause to the perfidy and personal cowardice of Napoleon. No allusion was made to the United States of America. Now, as heretofore, the Emperor was oblivious of that factor of his fortunes. The man was still storm-bound, chagrined, fully conscious of the fatefulness of the last act—the last act of

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a drama, as he pictured it—little aware of the great tragedy into which it was to develop! A weak man, a pleasure-seeker, a fellow of time-serving proclivities, would have gone to sea, embarked upon his ship and sailed away for ever from a land filled with a people indifferent to his aims and hostile to his rule. But it was a time freighted with disappointment and disaster. It was a scion of the House of Hapsburg who had now to meet the dilemma to which his own ambition had brought him. The whip and the spur were self-applied to the high-born character.

All the leaders among the foreign contingent made repeated efforts to see the Emperor, desirous of entreating him to continue to the sea, but in no instance with success; and after three days' halt they set out again upon the descent to Vera Cruz. Only to Father Fischer did Maximilian give audience; and despite the everlasting scheme which the holy Father pursued, his influence upon the Emperor was long since spent. The time was passed in almost entire solitude; but thoughts and pen ran on together, leaving records of the past well defined, and clearly setting forth the moving springs of his present action; but amidst all that he wrote there was neither forecast nor forethought—to him there was no future, except the grave.

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The course of the few conversations which Maximilian held with Father Fischer was directed by himself rather than by the priest. Now, as always, he trusted him ; and, though fully aware of the shortcomings of the predictions of the clerical party, he never for a moment felt that they had woven a most thoroughly exploited and selfish conspiracy about him, and were, with the French Emperor, equally guilty of duping and deserting him.

Father Fischer, who was really the formulator of it all, was a genius—a genius of subtle intrigue, dominated by the fanaticism and tenacity of purpose that have characterised the Order to which he belonged since its organisation. Like all the brotherhood, he possessed an attribute that Napoleon lacked—one that confirmed him in Maximilian's friendship — self-abnegation. Maximilian saw in Napoleon an ambitious, arrogant, parvenu prince ; in Father Fischer he recognised an earnest, itinerant, persevering priest, desirous of maintaining the welfare of the Church. In their not infrequent conversations the topic of personal spiritual welfare had never been touched upon. It was a more impersonal and abstract phase of religion that absorbed their attention.

It is needless to review once more the attitude

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of Father Fischer towards Maximilian. He was always the arch-conspirator, whose cleverness led him to appear to the Emperor as Maximilian saw him. The priest's present object was to watch the vessel wreck upon the rocks and to escape with as much booty as possible. The equation of the Emperor's personality had no weight with him. That a wreck would occur he fully knew; just how it would occur he knew better, perhaps, than any other. The Emperor even invited him to proceed with him back to Mexico, and from the capital to the field of action. The priest drew forth a large map, which he spread upon the table as Maximilian asked him to make the journey. After a few minutes' study he said, as he traced a route diagonally to the north-west :

"Your Majesty is most gracious. I, however, must leave for the north-west by the end of the week, by this route," drawing his finger across the board. "There is a large chapter-house of the Society of Jesus which I visit yearly at this season, to receive reports from the Fathers who have gathered there from the most northern mountain regions. I must go thither first, and will join your Majesty as soon thereafter as possible, as your Majesty proceeds north to join the Imperial forces."

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With that the two men, with scarcely a trace of a smile upon either face, shook hands and parted.

The Emperor then sent for Generals Miramon and Méjia, and held long conversations with them upon military matters. Imbued with the impractical enthusiasm of their race, they painted in the most glowing colours the chances of the Empire. Maximilian heard what they had to say, and then informed them that he was proceeding at once to the north, after a brief stay at the capital, to place himself at the head of his forces.

In the latter days of the Empire the facilities for travel were scarcely better than in the time of Cortez. The highways were unworthy of the name; the vehicles much more fatiguing than the saddle; the speed for a person of ordinary constitution not more than fifty miles a day; and the distance not infrequently governed by the accommodations to be obtained for the night; for even in the dire stress under which the Emperor made his journey there were many hamlets and towns of considerable size where the discomforts attending repose were too great for him to be subjected to.

Two weeks after the determination reached at Orizaba Maximilian joined the Imperial army at Queretaro. It was in May 1867. It is difficult

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to conceive a more desolate waste of land than that which borders the city on all sides—more desolate in appearance perhaps because the stream which graciously flows through the country is fringed on its banks with a small growth of muskite bush, suggesting from a distance trees and verdure. Like that of most Mexican cities, the site of Queretaro had been chosen on account of its water facilities and its natural advantages as a fortification; the latter had been further improved upon so that at the time the place was practically invulnerable, and consequently of great strategical importance. The Imperial army had fallen back upon this place purposely. The Emperor was met outside the city walls by General Miramon, who was in command, and his staff, and escorted with royal honours to the inner city, which was a citadel. Here he established his headquarters, and the day following his arrival held his first council of war. Within this inner city of La Cruz was the Empress's Regiment, commanded by Colonel Lopez, one of the Emperor's most trusted officers. Lopez had been decorated by Maximilian with the red ribbon of the Legion of Honour for valour. The council of war was to consider a further movement of the forces to the south. The Emperor gave no evidence of his

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wishes. All, excepting Colonel Lopez, were in favour of immediate withdrawal, chiefly on the ground of an insufficient quantity of food and supplies and ammunition to stand a protracted siege. Lopez argued that the Republican forces were not well organised; that they were no better prepared to lay siege than the Royalists were to withstand it; that as the enemy's army was composed of guerrilleros, the effect of confining them to the prosecution of a protracted siege would be tantamount to the creation of a mutiny; and that the enemy's only hope of maintaining their organisation was by constant marching and incessant marauding. The argument had the greatest weight with Maximilian, and it prevailed.

Within a few days of this decision it was announced to him early one morning that Queretaro was entirely surrounded by the Republican forces in great numbers. Then began active operations upon both sides. From the beginning it was apparent that the besiegers were far superior in numbers, equipment and general organisation. Besides his forces, the Emperor soon found he had the entire native population on his hands, together with many thousand Indians, who had been attracted there by the unusual state of military operations in the neighbourhood.

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Frequent sorties, however, were made, and Maximilian not only took a most active interest in them, but personally directed those which marked the latter days of the siege. So successful were these that it became apparent that a powerful and well-organised sortie in mass would, if properly timed and commanded, relieve the besieged of their native and civilian burden, and enable them to escape to the south. After weeks of activity provisions and ammunition were becoming exhausted and it was determined to retire upon Mexico. The grim army was keyed to the pitch of a desperate undertaking. The Empress's Regiment, still quartered in the citadel, was officered by many personal friends of the Emperor, foreigners, young men who had chosen to cast their lot in with the Imperialists to the end ; many were ardent admirers of the man, and were pleased to be allotted the duty of personally leading the Emperor's body-guard through the Republican lines. The most minute details characterised the arrangements, and all possible care was taken to keep from the enemy the knowledge of the final movement. The sortie was to be made on a morning early in June.

At midnight, upon changing the guard of the Empress's Regiment, the captain who was

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in charge of the small command at one gate received the countersign with the usual brevity, and turning to conduct his men to their barracks, received a blow from behind that completely floored him. When he had recovered himself, he saw by the dim light of the candles on either side of the archway that the gate was in possession of a company of the enemy's forces, who were covering his own men with their muskets, and who were commanded by Colonel Lopez himself, his own commander!

"They are friends."

Lopez smiled, and said: "Señor, you are no longer an officer of the Empress's Regiment, but a prisoner of the Republic. Resistance is futile. All your former brother officers are under confinement already, and the Emperor completely surrounded by a strong band of the Republican forces. He will not be disturbed till morning, but he and his entire army are prisoners without the firing of a gun."

The captain was too astonished to exclaim more than: "Can it be that you have betrayed him!"

At this Colonel Lopez grimaced unpleasantly and walked quickly away. It was a fact that Lopez, the most advanced and trusted of Maximilian's officers, had planned and successfully carried out this base treachery.

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At daybreak Maximilian, Miramon and Méjia were all aroused and informed of their imprisonment and doom. Thus had the infectious disease of Republicanism spread amongst the vitals of the Imperial forces.

When Maximilian was informed of his position he uttered not a word. No one was allowed to visit him except his body-servant and secretary. After two days of imprisonment he was informed that he was considered a public enemy and a menace to the peace and happiness of a great people ; that because of his issuance of and insistence upon the Black Decree, there was no other course open to the President of the Republic, Juarez, than to put him to death, together with his generals.

“It is immaterial to me,” said the Hapsburg, “this final decree against myself, but these generals of mine should not be considered and punished in the same manner.” He rose from his chair, fair and calm and handsome as ever. “Tell General President Juarez,” he said, in most distinct tones, “that I, Maximilian, in my office as Emperor of Mexico, wrote—personally wrote—all the Black Decree ; that I did it against the advice of Marshal Bazaine, and without the knowledge of either General Miramon or General Méjia, both of whom were in exile, thousands of

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miles away, at the time. Tell him," he exclaimed, "that to punish them with death is an act that no modern civilised nation can commit; that I am guilty, and will meet my guilt as he decrees; but that they are prisoners of war, ordinary prisoners of war, and must, in common with all my officers and men, be treated as such."

Many efforts were made to influence President Juarez to release Maximilian. They were efforts which the Emperor took no part in, nor was he cognisant of them all. Couriers were despatched to the port of Vera Cruz in hopes of overtaking Bazaine, but it was too late. Messengers were sent to Washington to implore the intervention of the United States; but the man was regarded there as a troublesome adventurer. Cables were sent to Louis Napoleon, now again at Saint Cloud; but he still crouched and cowered under the lash of the Empress of Mexico, and what force there was at his command was even then being drawn towards the German frontier. The King of the Belgians, the Emperor of Austria, the Pope of Rome, all, in the name of mercy, were beseeched to do something. Mexico was far away; a half-organised gipsy republic in a caravan! How could it be reached? It never was. The incarceration was brief, and dignified, and

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comfortable. Three days before that set for the execution a priest came to Maximilian's quarters for vesper services. During the ceremony he conveyed to him the information that at eleven o'clock that night it would be possible for him to evade the guard, walk beyond the gates of La Cruz, cross the mesa with a guide, mount a horse awaiting him, and be conducted by well-arranged relays to a point of absolute safety and escape.

Maximilian at once said he would go, but upon condition that his two generals were similarly saved. The priest, a stranger to him, said it was impossible. Maximilian then said :

"Let it be made possible to-morrow night, or the night after."

"Each night," replied the Father, "the guard is more closely drawn. The mode of escape allows only one to be saved. The disguise is complete; but the party must be small and it is impossible to include any but yourself."

"Say then to your associates," said Maximilian, in calm and tender tones, "that I appreciate their attentions, but that I cannot save myself and leave the two faithful officers who commanded my forces here behind me to die. I will stay, and we will die together."

The clergy had not been ungrateful, though

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lamentably powerless. For a moment the picture crossed Maximilian's mind of a huge figure, of massive and ponderous head, almost Oriental, Hebrew jowl, in the garb of a priest of the Society of Jesus; and then he recalled the cry from the Cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

The sun as it raised its orb over the continent of Europe on the 19th of June 1867 looked down upon the charming walks and balconies of the palace of Miramar by the shores of the matchless Adriatic. All was quiet there and beautiful, and filled with a sweetness which verdure under skilful cultivation always yields. There was nothing in the scene suggestive of the dark tragedy which was that day to fall upon the royal House of Hapsburg.

Later in the day the travelling sun cheered the lovely walks in the gardens of the Vatican as the aged Pope walked serenely forth. Here, too, everything was as usual.

There was a tramp of smartly driven horses up the Champs Élysées in Paris that day, and a rush of fashionable equipages reaching all the way from the entrance of the Bois de Boulogne to the Place de la Concorde and beyond. The whole world seemed to be there. Baron James Rothschild, the richest of men, was driving in

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true Oriental style with one of his own sex, from time to time greeting with a cheery bow or a familiar salutation someone in the many elegant equipages.

People turned as if in great expectancy. The Emperor of the French and the Empress, with their youthful son, drove swiftly past in all the sunlight and happiness of a world full of joy. But what was that shadow on the Emperor's brow?

Through a windowed niche in a high hall the sun, towards evening, looked in upon an old forest castle in a remote corner of Belgium. A woman stood at the casement. She was elegantly attired, of youthful figure, erect, symmetrical and of haughty bearing. The sun shone in upon her, and rested on a face youthful yet withered, an eye without fire, vacant and dull and yet alive. Could it be Charlotta, once Empress of Mexico? The woman shuddered and shivered, as if someone had walked over her grave. In her empty hand she seemed to hold a paper which she read abstractedly. That day, in far-away Mexico, a letter had been indited to her :

“TO MY BELOVED CHARLOTTA,—If God ever permits you to recover and read these lines, you will learn the cruelty of the fate which has never ceased to pursue me since your departure for

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Europe. You carried with you my soul and my happiness. Why did I not listen to you? So many events, alas! so many unexpected and unmerited catastrophes have overwhelmed me, that I have no more hope in my heart, and I await death as a delivering angel.

"I die without agony. I shall fall with glory, like a soldier, like a conquered king. If you have not the power to bear so much suffering, if God soon reunites us, I shall bless the divine and paternal hand which has so rudely stricken us. Adieu!

"THY POOR MAX."

The day wore on and the same sun rose over the waste of waters of the broad Atlantic and aroused the Western Hemisphere to work. The mighty Republic of the North seemed rather than any other nation preordained to be the one which Maximilian had seen in the immortal lines of Milton, "rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, like an eagle mewing her mighty youth and kindling her undazzled eyes at the midday sun." The world was at work and the world was at play, heeding little else but its immediate concerns.

On the barren mesa, just outside the walls of Queretaro, as the sun looked over the eastern horizon, was to be seen the entire army of the

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Republic of Mexico, drawn up in an extended half-circle. As the light became clearer, thousands of the inhabitants of the city wended their way, in all manner of costumes, towards the knoll well within the circle of the troops. The entire population, apparently in holiday attire, were slowly taking up positions in this amphitheatre of nature to witness the execution of Maximilian and his generals.

No gathering of natives in the Far or Near East can equal in colour and extreme picturesqueness an assembly of Mexicans. Instinctively nomadic, naturally of swarthy complexion, tinged with the mixture of Aztec and negro and Indian blood, exhibiting the various manners, characteristics and costumes of these respective races, they collectively present a mass of colour such as few artists would be able to depict on canvas.

The Indians gave the impression of being most seriously concerned with that which was about to take place. The men in their immense sombreros drew their zerapes closely over their high, rough-boned shoulders, and stood silently gazing before them. Their women, equally gaudily attired in skirt and blanket, stooped or crouched beside them at their feet; the children listlessly slept upon their mothers' backs, whilst

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those of greater age stood beside and grasped a fringe of the paternal dress.

From the eastern gate three laudaus were seen to come forth, each drawn by a pair of mules; and as they approached the middle of the circle it could be seen that each was occupied by only one person, and, except for the driver on the box, entirely unguarded and unattended. Reaching a spot previously designated by the authorities, the drivers stopped, and Maximilian, Miramon and Méjia alighted. Whereupon the three equipages were galloped away towards the city for some distance, when the drivers, as of one accord, drew rein and, actuated by curiosity, looked back to where the three men stood.

When they had alighted, Maximilian approached each general in turn, with a cordial shake of the hand and a word of greeting. Then, addressing them both, he said: "I have been requested by General Juarez that you stand on either side of me; but it is better that you, General Miramon, as the chief military leader, should occupy the place of greatest honour. It is my last request that you stand between General Méjia and myself."

General Miramon briefly and firmly declined:

"No, your Majesty, we will die on either side of you."

"I am no longer a monarch," said Maximilian;

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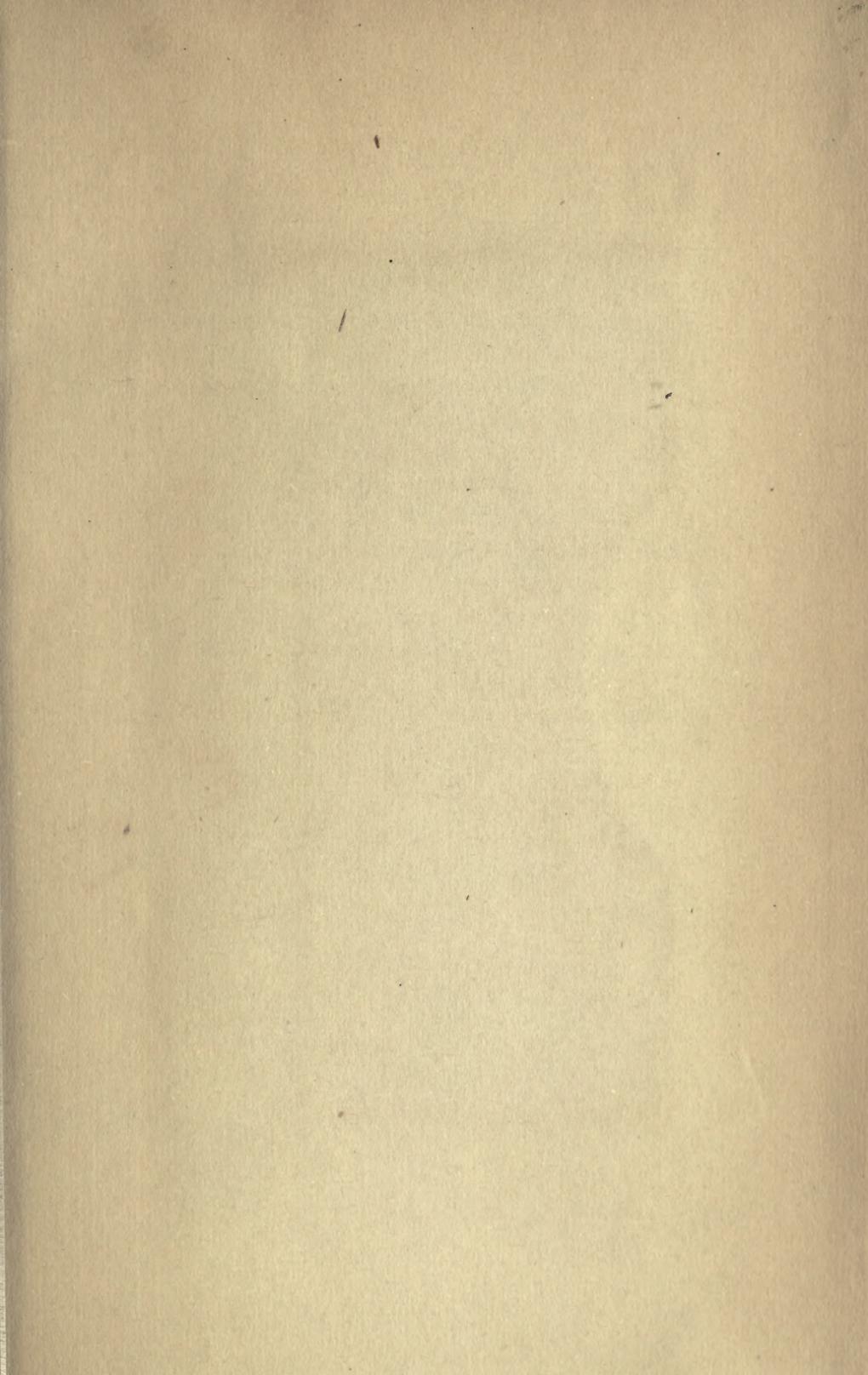
"we are three unfortunate fellow-beings unjustly sent to meet our Maker."

Meantime the guard of execution had advanced. Addressing them, Maximilian said :

" Soldiers of the Republic, the unpleasant duty is before you of carrying out the orders of your superiors, and of shooting unto death us three military prisoners. The highest act of a soldier is to obey his officers. No possible stain can come upon any of you for shooting us. Always do your duty, and the Great God, our common Father, will provide for you. Upon the command of your officer to shoot, aim at the heart of each of us." Then, turning to his companions, who had remained silent, he said : " Generals, adieu."

A volley followed the command, quickly given, and the three men fell dead simultaneously.

Thus it is that "Man proposes, and God disposes."



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